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# Teachers' Discourse on English Language Learners: Cultural Models of Language and Learning

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TEACHERS' DISCOURSE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:  
CULTURAL MODELS OF LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

by

Amy J. Heineke

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CULTURAL MODELS OF LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study explores teacher learning about English language learners (ELLs) in a small-group, school-based context at an urban elementary school in Arizona. Sociocultural perspectives on teacher learning guided the analysis of teachers' participation in a teacher study group over six months. The teacher study group aimed to support educators of ELLs at a time of new language policy implementation, which required ELLs to enroll in an English language development (ELD) classroom for four hours of skill-based English language instruction.

In the first semester of language policy implementation, I collected discursive data that showcased the social interaction of teachers and their co-construction of knowledge in the study group. After seven teacher study group sessions and 14 individual interviews, I analyzed teachers' discourse to discern the cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs to understand the figured world of ELD teaching. Using documentation of language policies and observations of ELD teacher trainings, I scrutinized the structures in the educational institution that supported the dominant cultural models reflected in teachers' discourse – most notably the English-only policies mandated by Arizona Proposition 203. I then explored how teachers' situated identities mediated discourse in teacher study group sessions to allow for the acceptance or rejection of dominant cultural models.

Finally, I delved into teacher learning about ELLs through the investigation of the changes in teachers' cultural models and discourse over time. I discovered that the introduction of literary tools allowed teachers to take new perspectives and interrupt dominant cultural models. Teachers' talk changed over time, as they negotiated dominant cultural models and co-constructed knowledge for ELD classroom practice. The most

substantial changes in teachers' talk, related to cultural models of language and learning, occurred later in the semester, in conjunction with the period when institutional pressures to comply with language policies waned. My research holds implications for teacher learning and ELLs and calls for re-figuring education for ELLs by supporting teachers in policy implementation, creating change from within schools through teacher learning communities, and designing university coursework to emphasize the unique and diverse needs of ELLs in the classroom.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mom,  
CYNTHIA KAY LAUBE,  
for a lifetime of support, love, and educational advocacy.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Details
ADE	Arizona Department of Education
AIMS	Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards
AR	Accelerated Reader
AZELLA	Arizona English Language Learner Assessment
CAP	Challenging Academic Potential
ELD	English Language Development
ELL	English Language Learner
ELP	English Language Proficiency
ESL	English as a Second Language
LEP	Limited English Proficient
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
SEI	Structured English Immersion
SIOP	Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol
TFA	Teach For America

## CHAPTER 1

### The Education of English Language Learners in United States Schools: American Dream or Nightmare?

#### PESADILLAS

*a veces  
los sueños*

*que ignoran  
o excluyen*

*los sueños  
de otros*

*se vuelven  
pesadillas*

#### NIGHTMARES

*sometimes  
dreams*

*that ignore  
or exclude*

*the dreams  
of others*

*become  
nightmares*

—Francisco X. Alarcón, Poems to Dream Together

The *American Dream* is a frequently used fallacy that encourages assimilation for the culturally and linguistically diverse across the United States (U.S.) to be able to attain success, wealth, and happiness. Fueled primarily by societal discourse against immigration and linguistic difference, English-only language policies at schools aim to absorb cultural and linguistic difference and assimilate diverse students in the mythical *American melting pot*. As the policies devalue the ability to speak another language, the “language as problem” lens (Ruiz, 1984, p. 18) often leads to low expectations for English Language Learners (ELLs; i.e., students who are learning the English language and whose native language is not English), which results in poor academic achievement, high dropout rates, and low educational attainment. Further, teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the educational needs and unique cultural and linguistic challenges that ELLs face in the classroom (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). The multi-faceted failure of the educational institution to account for the diverse student population leads to

inequalities for ELLs in the classroom. Grounded in the above issues, with this dissertation, I seek to determine how teachers learn about ELLs while grappling with policies and notions of language instruction in order to give all students the opportunity to achieve their own individual and unique dreams.

*Educational Inequities for English Language Learners*

U.S. classrooms are more culturally and linguistically diverse today than ever before. One Kindergarten-through-twelfth-grade (K-12) student in every three represents a racial or ethnic minority background (i.e., a non-White background; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and 1 in every 10 is an ELL (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The number of ELLs in particular is rapidly on the rise, having increased by 65% in the last decade. If the growth trend continues, one in every three students will be considered an ELL by the year 2043 (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The majority of ELLs in the U.S. are immigrants or children of immigrants, and over two thirds speak Spanish as their first language (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Arizona's numbers are above the national average, as one in every six Arizonan students is ELL, most of whom are from a Latino background and speak Spanish as a first language (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).

Despite the growing population in Arizona and across the U.S., schools have not met the academic needs of Latinos or ELLs. In the past decade, high school dropout rates for Latinos (i.e., ELL Latinos and non-ELL Latinos) are quadruple the rate of White students and double the rate of Black students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Although 22% of Latinos drop out of high school annually nationwide, Arizona exceeds the national average: Forty percent of Arizonan Latinos and 56% of Arizonan ELLs

dropped out of high school in 2006 (Arizona Department of Education, 2008c). For the Latino students who graduate from high school, only 34% ever attend a semester of college, whereas 66% of White students and 50% of Black students have some college experience (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). In summary, Latinos and ELLs do not attain the same academic achievement as other ethnic groups. These numbers paint a grim picture and demonstrate that Arizona and U.S. schools do not meet the learning needs of the growing population of ELL and Latino students. The lack of public outcry for this evident achievement gap is grounded in the negative societal discourse toward immigration, which many perceive as a threat to our national unity (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

Sharing a border with Mexico, Arizona is at the epicenter of the contemporary Mexican immigration debate. In a nationwide study on current immigration issues in the urban U.S., Phoenix residents consistently gave the highest response rate to anti-immigrant sentiments and negativity toward the growing Latino population (Kohut, Keeter, Doherty, Suro, & Escobar, 2006). Fifty-five percent of 800 Phoenix respondents asserted that immigration in the community was a “very big problem,” and 23% said that it was a “moderately big problem” (Kohut *et al.*, 2006, p. 9). In other cities (e.g., Las Vegas, Chicago, Charlotte, Washington, D.C.) with similar immigration patterns, the numbers were much lower and demonstrate that Phoenix inhabitants perceive immigration as a problem in the local community (Kohut *et al.*, 2006). Phoenix residents also exposed their dissatisfaction with immigrants’ not assimilating to the U.S. lifestyle, as 52% said that today’s immigrants are less willing to adapt than those in the early 1900s (Kohut *et al.*, 2006). The “immigration problem” (Massey, 2005, p. 5) is compounded due to the trepidation that linguistic

difference threatens national unity. In Phoenix that fear is reflected in the 66% of individuals that believe that immigrants do not learn English fast enough (Kohut *et al.*, 2006).

The anti-immigrant sentiment is related to the viewpoint that linguistic diversity is fundamentally un-American.<sup>1</sup> Grounded in the dominant discourse of monolingualism, U.S. society as a whole does not value bilingualism (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Whereas ELLs are obliged to learn English, societal norms give no impetus for mainstream students to learn a second language. Rather than promote bilingualism for all U.S. residents, the insistence on English monolingualism specifically targets and stigmatizes ELLs and their native languages. In this way, bilingualism is perceived and propagated as an imminent threat to U.S. nationalism. Arizona state representative Russell Pierce declared that the rising number of Spanish-speaking immigrants threatened to turn Arizona into a bilingual state. He went on to acknowledge, “It’s [rise in Spanish-speaking residents] absolutely bad for America. We are an English speaking nation, and we need to encourage everyone to speak English” (González, 2008b).

The presumed threat of linguistic diversity has led to widespread public support of language policies that support English monolingualism. Valdés (2000) confirmed, “The United States is undergoing a transformation in which members of the majority or dominant group have deliberately chosen to use language as a strategy of exclusion” (p. 165). A prominent voice of that dominant group, Harvard sociologist Samuel Huntington, targeted the linguistically diverse, southwestern U.S., particularly the large number of “unassimilable”

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, terms inclusive of the word *America* or *American* refer to the United States only and are not meant to reflect other North, Central, and South American nations.

(Huntington, 2004, as cited in Telles & Ortiz, 2008, p. 7) Mexicans and illegal immigrants. He declared, “There is no Americano Dream. There is only the American Dream .... Mexican Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English” (Huntington, 2004, as cited in Telles & Ortiz, 2008, p. 7). With the large Latino population and corresponding hindrance to assimilation, Huntington asserted that Spanish-speaking Latinos imperil American national unity.

Many immigrant families’ first contact with the American mainstream occurs when their children enter school (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Weinstein, 1983). Explaining his rationale for introducing legislation to ban ethnic studies in Arizona, state superintendent Tom Horne defined U.S. schools as locales that “brought together students from different backgrounds and taught them to be Americans” (Arizona Department of Education, 2009, p. 1). In order to teach diverse students to *be Americans*, the educational institution uses monolingual and assimilative policies to ensure that ELLs quickly begin cultural and linguistic assimilation.

Grounded in the pervasive anti-immigrant sentiments of Arizona, English-only language policy as a strategy of exclusion was legalized through Proposition 203 in 2000 (see Appendix A). Funded by billionaire Ron Unz, the *English for the Children* campaign led voters to pass the English-only mandates by huge margins (Delisario & Dunne, 2000). The policy declared English as the official medium of instruction in schools and nearly eradicated the bilingual programs that once flourished around Arizona. Proposition 203 designated Structured English Immersion (SEI) as the instructional approach to teach ELLs to comply with the Lau v. Nichols federal ruling of 1974, which forbid submersion of ELLs in English-

only classrooms. SEI skirted the question of submersion by calling for “curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the [English] language” (Arizona Department of Education, 2000, p. 1). Mirroring the xenophobic discourse of Huntington, the official government document of Proposition 203 in Arizona states,

The English language is the national public language of the United States of America and the state of Arizona .... Immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement .... Therefore it is resolved that: all children in Arizona public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible. (Arizona Department of Education, 2000, p. 1)

The discourse of the educational policy reflects the dominant societal discourse of assimilation and monolingualism, grounding classroom instruction in mainstream conformity rather than the tenets of second language acquisition or the desire to best serve the unique and diverse needs of ELLs.

#### *Educational Inequity and the Role of Teachers*

Teachers are the link between macro-institutional policies and the micro-interactions with students in their classrooms (Cummins, 2000). Although the broader educational policies cannot be immediately changed, teachers can mediate between policy and practice to “either reinforce coercive relations of power or promote collaborative relations of power” (Cummins, 2000, p. 44). By reinforcing coercive power relations, teachers maintain the assimilationist orientation of Proposition 203, whereas by promoting collaborative power



relations, teachers alter instruction and empower themselves, students, and communities (Cummins, 2000). To bring about this transformation and empowerment, teachers require sound pedagogy to provide meaningful instruction for language development, academic achievement, and cultural and linguistic pride; however, many teachers enter the classroom without adequate or appropriate preparation to work with ELLs (Gándara *et al.*, 2003; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). Lacking the knowledge, skills, or experiences to meet the unique and diverse needs of ELLs may lead teachers to reproduce dominant societal discourse and educational policies in the classroom, which adversely affects teachers' instruction and ability to reach the unique needs of ELLs.

In this study, I explore how teachers respond to school-based teacher learning experiences organized to prepare them to work more effectively with ELLs, specifically when under institutional pressures and policies. I use cultural models (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1993; Holland & Quinn, 1987) as a tool of inquiry to determine how teachers mediate between the micro-level of interaction and the macro-level of the institution (Gee, 2005). When teachers are faced with implementing institutional language policies, these cultural models, or oversimplified *theories* of the world, allow underprepared teachers to weather the challenges and complexities of teaching ELLs, such as the ascription of generic labels to define students' unique needs or the assumption of cultural, linguistic, and academic homogeneity among ELLs. Linking macro-level policy and micro-level classroom practice, cultural models can illustrate how broader societal discourse and the educational institution shape teachers' experiences and discourses. An understanding of teachers' cultural models, along with the institutional structures and individual situated identities that shape them,

creates a starting point for teachers to perceive themselves as active mediators of policy and practice, such that they become empowered to transform their instruction to better meet the needs of ELLs in the classroom (Cummins, 2000).

*Intent and Inquiry for Educational Equity*

This study focuses on teachers of ELLs during a time of a mandated language policy implementation in Arizona. The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers grapple with policies and notions of teaching and learning language and determine how educators can learn about teaching ELLs in a small-group setting. The questions that guide this research are these:

- What are the cultural models reflected in teachers' discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' different situated identities (e.g., teachers, citizens) mediate their discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' discourses and cultural models on language, learning, and ELLs change when introduced to new tools and ideas in a small group?

With the study, I aim to understand (a) the cultural models that affect teachers' instruction and expectations of ELLs, (b) how the various facets of teachers' identities mediate their discourse, and (c) whether and how teachers' talk on ELLs changes through collaborative discourse in a small group setting. Below are definitions of the key terms used throughout my dissertation.

- *Cultural model* – A taken-for-granted assumption that is formed and used, often unknowingly, to oversimplify and make sense of a complex world (D’Andrade & Strauss, 1993; Gee, 2005; Holland & Quinn, 1987).
- *Situated identity* – The various ways in which teachers participate within different social groups, cultures, and institutions (Gee, 2005).
- *English Language Learner (ELL)* – A student who is in the process of learning the English language, determined in Arizona by lack of proficiency on the mandated language assessment.
- *Structured English Immersion (SEI)* – A model where ELLs are in classrooms separate from mainstream students and receive intensive English-only language instruction.
- *English Language Development (ELD)* – The SEI model mandated in Arizona for teaching ELLs, which includes four hours of instruction in English language skills.

### *Contributions to the Field*

From the statistics in Arizona and across the nation, the academic achievement gap for both Latinos and ELLs is a clear reality. The current educational policies, grounded in the American Dream fallacy that breeds monolingualism and assimilation, are not meeting the unique and diverse needs of ELLs, evidenced by ELLs’ (and more broadly, Latinos’) poor academic achievement. The all-encompassing label of *English language learner* takes away from the diversity and complexity within the nation’s population of ELLs, as students differ in country of origin, first language abilities, socio-economic status, prior schooling, cultural

traditions, English proficiency, and many other factors (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The homogenizing ELL label, the assimilative language policy, and the poor preparation of teachers for the diversity of students in their classrooms lead to instruction that does not value the resources and funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) that students bring to the classroom.

In addition to the monolingualism and assimilation inherent in the original policy, SEI has not increased ELLs' school achievement (Krashen, 2001, 2004; MacSwan, 2004; Mahoney, MacSwan, & Thompson, 2004, 2005; Wright, 2005). Six years after the passage of Proposition 203, House Bill 2064 called for a more prescriptive approach to ELL instruction and gave responsibility to the ELL Task Force, comprised of nine members from education and non-education backgrounds, to develop a cost-efficient SEI model to implement in Arizona schools. Based on what prominent ELL scholars deemed limited and incorrectly interpreted research (Krashen, Rolstad, & MacSwan, 2007), the mandated changes for the 2008-2009 school year did not include research-based, effective practices for ELLs.

In the resulting ELD model, which went into effect in fall 2008, students are grouped in classrooms based on language proficiency, which is determined and classified by the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) standardized test. With four hours of mandated skill-based language instruction under the new ELD model, teaching and learning does not include the typical content areas, such as science or social studies. The four-hour ELD block is broken into five different English-language-specific *content areas*, including reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and conversation. The new ELD mandates, including the segregation of ELLs and the four hours of discrete skills instruction, pose new

challenges for teachers to allow students to achieve academic success. During this policy implementation, prioritizing teacher learning is crucial to ensure meaningful instruction for ELLs in the classroom.

Experts identify the topic of teacher learning about ELLs as important. Both teacher preparation and teacher learning research lump culturally and linguistically diverse students together, conceptualizing language as one of the various aspects of culture (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). Gándara and colleagues (2003) noted the deficiency in the field of teacher education in the inadequate professional development to meet the “specialized needs of teachers of English learners” (p. 19). In an overview of current research in the field, Zeichner (2005) stated, “Research on the preparation of teachers to teach underserved populations should pay special attention to the preparation of teachers to teach English-language learners because almost no research has been conducted on this aspect of diversity in teacher education” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 747). Lucas and Grinberg (2008) discussed the lack in both fields – the failure of teacher preparation for ELLs and the lack of empirical research on preparing teachers to teach ELLs: “Research that examines the implications and impacts of the various efforts to prepare classroom teachers to teach ELLs is needed” (p. 628). The dearth in the literature is clear, which makes my dissertation significant to both practice and theory. Specifically, the present study will fill a gap in teacher preparation practice and theory by examining a small-group approach to support teachers in learning about ELLs.

The findings will also prove useful to both policymakers and practitioners. Because this study is framed in Arizona educational mandates, policymakers will be able to see the detriments and areas for improvement that exist within the new approach to teaching ELLs.

At thousands of Arizona schools, teachers and administrators can use this study as a scrutinized effort into one school as faculty members worked together to implement the mandates appropriately while providing effective instruction to ELLs. Most importantly, this study holds significance for ELLs in Arizona and across the nation where language policies have a rigid hold on instruction and expectations. When teachers and school leaders come together in purposeful and meaningful collaboration to improve instruction for ELLs, the students will ultimately benefit from teachers' high and unwavering expectations, effective and meaningful instruction, and welcoming and empowering school environment (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

#### *Personal Rationale*

Whereas the statistics and literature paint a clear picture of the educational disadvantages that exist today for ELLs, I have also seen the realities in the classroom with my own eyes. I moved from the Midwest to Arizona in 2002 to be a bilingual Kindergarten teacher. After taking Spanish throughout junior high and high school, living in Argentina as a foreign exchange student, and majoring in Spanish for my undergraduate studies, I was ecstatic to use my bilingualism to fuel my passion for teaching children. As I sat through new teacher orientation inservice, I eagerly planned how to design and decorate my classroom to surround my students with English and Spanish language and literacy. I was busy jotting down ideas when the topic of conversation turned to the laws and policies of the state of Arizona. *English only* were the two words that told me I was ill-prepared for the updated Arizona language policy before my cross-country move to become a bilingual teacher.

Although disappointed at my lack of opportunity to teach in the bilingual context and morally at odds with the English-only policy, I loved my job working in a predominantly Latino neighborhood with many Mexican immigrant students. Even with the constraints of the law, I was able to bring in and celebrate the Latino culture and Spanish language – reinforcing to parents and children the value of being bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. Throughout my years in the classroom, I moved beyond the initial selfish disappointment of not being able to use my bilingualism to become an advocate for ELLs. Whereas my classroom celebrated cultural and linguistic diversity, I realized that many of my colleagues were unprepared or underprepared to teach non-native-English-speaking students who were still learning the English language. Many teachers saw the students' linguistic and cultural differences as hindrances or deficits to their learning. They reprimanded students for speaking Spanish, chastised anything less than Standard English grammar, and ignored the many strengths and assets that students brought to the classroom. Consequently, I watched year after year as ELLs became unexcited about school, disengaged from classroom instruction, and did not make significant academic gains.

Both my academic pursuits in graduate school and my personal experiences in the classroom led me to the poignant realization that ELLs do not receive the best possible education in our schools. Through both my research and teaching at the university, I began to seek out ways to encourage teachers to learn to better address the needs of their ELLs by valuing and utilizing the rich pool of cultural and linguistic resources that ELLs bring to the school setting. This dissertation study is the result of such efforts.

### *Research Delimitations*

I conducted the case study research at Maravilla School<sup>2</sup> – a large, urban elementary school in Arizona. The school matched the selection criteria established for the study, which included an urban Arizona setting with a large ELL student population that was working to implement the new ELD mandates in the 2008-2009 school year. I collected data via interviews and bi-monthly teacher study group meetings in the first semester of the school year from July to December 2008. The population of the study consisted of teachers and other school staff who worked to meet the compliance requirements of Arizona Department of Education (ADE; also referred to as *state department* for the purposes of this dissertation). The sample, or the teacher study group participants, included six ELD teachers and one instructional coach. Focusing primarily on the interaction and dialogue during the small-group teacher learning context, the study involved a meticulous examination of the discourse of educators participating in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group during the time of the ELD policy implementation.

### *Organization of the Dissertation*

The remainder of the study is organized in the following manner. Chapter 2 begins by grounding the research in the sociocultural theory of teacher learning and reviewing the literature on ELL teacher learning research. Chapter 3 includes an explanation of the methodology, including the teacher study group context and participants, qualitative methods, and discourse analysis. The findings of the research are presented over three chapters. Chapter 4 answers the first research question by examination of the dominant

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<sup>2</sup> All proper names that appear in the text (with the exception of the author's) are pseudonyms to maintain participants' confidentiality.



cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs reflected in teachers' discourse. Chapter 5 responds to the second research question and explores how the situated identities of ELD teachers mediated discourse in the study group. Chapter 6 answers the third research question and examines the negotiation of dominant cultural models and co-construction of knowledge in the teacher study group interaction. The final chapter offers conclusions, implications, and directions for future research and teacher preparation.

## CHAPTER 2

### Teacher Learning: Theoretical Frame and Review of the Literature

This chapter outlines teacher learning as a research field. I begin with a comprehensive overview of the sociocultural paradigm (Rogoff, 2003) that frames my research. I then review the literature that situates my study with respect to teachers' cultural models, teachers' identities, and teacher learning and ELLs.

#### *Theoretical Perspectives*

##### *Teacher Learning as a Research Field*

Although educational research has long been interested in student learning, the focus on how teachers learn is relatively new to the academic field (i.e., only three decades of empirical studies on teacher learning are available; Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The theoretical paradigms largely seen in teacher learning research – behaviorist, constructivist, and sociocultural – rely on different beliefs and understandings about what learning looks like and how it occurs. To ground my study in the larger realm of teacher learning research, I review how teacher learning is conceptualized with each theoretical lens.

*Behaviorism* (Skinner, 1938; Thorndike, 1929, 1949) contends that learning is the transmission of information from teacher to learner, which is demonstrated through an individual's change in action or behavior. Behaviorist teacher learning drives the professional development in most schools, most commonly seen as the staff inservice where an expert entity trains teachers to give instruction in one prescribed way. As with other fields of research that utilize behaviorism, educational studies in this paradigm investigate the observable and measurable aspects of behavior to demonstrate learning. Good teachers are determined by the concrete and comparative aspects of schooling through quantitative measures of student achievement, such as the scores that students receive on standardized

tests (Slavin, 1995; Slavin & Madden, 2000). The behaviorist approach disregards the teacher as an independent thinker and instead frames the educator as engaging in prescriptive behaviors as a response to external stimuli, such as policies, curriculums, and standards. Consequently, behaviorism does not value teachers as intelligent, creative individuals who can actively engage in their own learning.

*Constructivism* (Piaget, 1979) contends that learning is the conceptual change and internalization of knowledge within an individual. From this perspective, development is largely internally controlled – the learner as an individual seeks and seizes knowledge from his or her social context. This framework perceives educators as independent thinkers and seeks to understand how they use information and experience from the social world to develop the knowledge to best instruct students. Constructivist teacher learning research centers on how individual educators develop concepts in their knowledge base, such as subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Teacher learning in this paradigm is concerned with the formation of the conceptual knowledge base that educators have of content, pedagogy, and practice (Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001). As a result, constructivism conceptualizes knowledge in the mind of an individual, therefore minimizing the social nature of learning through interaction and dialogue.

The *sociocultural* paradigm (Rogoff, 2003) frames the construction of knowledge as social and cultural in nature, in which learning simultaneously takes places on the individual, interpersonal, and institutional planes. Rather than supposing a passive individual controlled by the surrounding world or an active individual who takes charge of his or her own cognitive development, the sociocultural theorist perceives learning as the collaboration

between an active individual and active social environment (Berk & Winsler, 1995). Learning is not a behavioral or conceptual change of an individual; rather, learning is understood as a change in participation on the multiple planes of social and cultural activity. The sociocultural paradigm takes into account the biological and social nature of learning that allows for the use of higher-level thinking with more-advanced peers, which facilitates the development of an individual (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, teachers are actively involved in their own learning through social interaction with others around them. My research on teacher learning is framed with sociocultural theory; therefore, I will further explain the tenets that are foundational to this study.

#### *Sociocultural Tenets of Teacher Learning*

Sociocultural theory recognizes that individuals acquire knowledge through participation in social and cultural activities with others, which makes knowledge socially constructed (Cole & Engestrom, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Learning surpasses the skin and skull of an individual (Wertsch, 1991, p. 14); that is, learning is cultural, social, collaborative, and mediated. Because learning is simultaneously cultural, social, collaborative, and mediated, I use those descriptors to organize my explanation of the complex notion of teacher learning in the sociocultural framework.

*Teacher learning as cultural.* Culture is intricate; therefore, it is difficult to give one clear and comprehensible definition of what comprises *culture*. Duranti (2001) explained five theories of culture, each of which is inherently tied to the lens in which individuals perceive the world. Those who employ a sociocultural lens operate with culture as systems of mediation and practice, where culture mediates one's actions and interactions with others

through participation in communities and activities. This conceptualization of culture incorporates two key ideas: (a) The human mind is mediated by cultural practices and processes that have changed and developed over the course of history (Vygotsky, 1978) and (b) These cultural practices and processes continue to change and develop every day (Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, cultural processes and an individual's learning are inextricably linked. Individuals contribute to the creation of cultural processes and cultural processes contribute to the creation of individuals. Thus, individual and cultural processes are “mutually constituting rather than defined separately from each other” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 51).

As culture and the individual are constantly transforming each other, both are dynamic in nature (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). Culture is not a label or reference to an individual- or group-level variable, but the creation of shared practices and meanings through social interaction (Gutiérrez, 2002; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Because individuals are part of various cultures that are always changing, individuals are perceived and understood through participation in dynamic communities rather than membership to one static group (Rogoff, 2003). As cultural processes both define and are defined by individuals, an individual's development and learning “must be understood in, and cannot be separated from, its social and cultural-historical context” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 50). Erickson (2001) described the relationship between culture and the individual simply, as culture is the individual's “primary human toolkit” that “structures the ‘default’ conditions of the everyday practices of being human” (p. 32).

The sociocultural approach to learning is integral in educational research. Erickson (2001) explained that everything in education relates to culture:

Culture shapes and is shaped by the learning and teaching that happen during the practical conduct of daily life within all the educational settings we encounter as learning environments through the human life span, in families, in school classrooms, in community settings, and in the workplace. (p. 32)

When approached from other paradigms, research on diverse learners ascribe static *cultural* traits that assume all members of a particular group are homogenous, sharing the same set of experiences, skills, and interests (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Conversely, the sociocultural perspective accounts for the variation and transformation of individuals and their practices and aims to understand “regularities in how engagement in shared and dynamic practices of different communities contributes to individual learning and development” (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003, p. 21). Therefore, the sociocultural lens is integral to understanding how teachers learn about culturally and linguistically diverse students.

*Teacher learning as social.* Although it is profoundly affected by cultural and historical processes, knowledge is also understood to be socially constructed when individuals interact with one another (Bahktin, 1981). Put simply by Freedman and Ball (2004), “All learning is at its core social” (p. 6).

The social nature of learning can be understood through the zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD assesses learning without reducing measurement of knowledge to the matured, fossilized mental functioning of an individual (Moll, 1990). Teachers learn in social settings, and the learning that occurs via social interaction with educator peers pushes forward the development of the individual educator. The ZPD is the distance between actual and potential developmental levels, determined by

the problem-solving that takes place individually and that which is done in collaboration with more capable peers. Teachers' actual developmental level consists of the mental functions that guide their instruction from prior experiences in preservice training and inservice professional development. When contradictions arise in practice from independent problem-solving, teachers seek guidance and collaboration of other educator peers. The potential level of development is the problem-solving that takes place socially through teacher collaboration to better understand practice and resolve contradictions. The ZPD of teacher learning, then, is the distance between the actual developmental level as an individual and the potential developmental level within a social group of educators. The knowledge acquired interpersonally through collaboration is appropriated by the individual teacher and used to guide subsequent problem-solving behaviors (Moll, 1990). The ZPD includes "models of a future, models of a past, and activities that resolve contradictions between them" (Griffin & Cole, 1984, p. 49).

The conception of a community of learners (Rogoff, 1994) builds on the social nature of learning espoused by the sociocultural paradigm. Rogoff explained, "The idea of a community of learners is based on the premise that learning occurs as individuals participate in shared endeavors with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles in sociocultural activity" (1994, p. 209). A community of practice is understood as a group of individuals who come together with a common purpose or concern and learn through regular social interactions with one another (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2002). In both communities of learners and communities of practice, members have various roles and levels of participation that vary by accessibility, maturity of membership, varying relationships, and

differing situations (Rogoff, 1994, p. 213). Newcomers to the community are acknowledged as having legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and are apprenticed into the community by those who have been members for a longer period of time.

Both constructs of community identify learning demonstrated through a deepening or changing participation over time in a social group (Rogoff, 2003; Wenger, 1998). Teachers participate in a learning community when they function together as a social group and have a shared repertoire of community resources, practices, and artifacts. Teacher learning occurs when teachers are actively involved in conversation and negotiation, not simply through individual cognitive efforts. Within the interaction of a teacher learning community (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Westheimer, 2008), individual participation changes and develops over time, such as roles individuals play, purposes and modes of involvement, flexibility and attitude toward change in involvement, and how involvement relates to changes in community practices (Rogoff, 1997). Teachers' changing participation in various ways within a community demonstrates learning within the sociocultural perspective.

*Teacher learning as collaborative.* With the complex nature of the many social and cultural factors that affect the cognition of an individual, learning is understood on three planes that collaborate and coexist – the institutional, interpersonal, and personal planes (Rogoff, 2003). Whereas learning may be visible on one plane, the others are also present in the background and play a role in the activity that occurs. The institutional plane brings in the cultural and historical contexts and includes the language, rules, beliefs, values, and identities that are shared with others. The interpersonal plane focuses on social interaction and involves communication and dialogue between individuals. The personal plane gives attention to the



cognition, behavior, beliefs, and values of an individual (Rogoff, 1995). Teachers as individuals are products of the social and cultural interactions in which they participate on the three different planes. In studying teacher learning with a sociocultural lens, each of the mutually constituting planes must be considered.

The institutional plane of an educator is the culturally engrained practices and processes, such as the context and rules of the university, school, or district; shared identities and values of the teaching profession; educational legislation; and mandates that direct instruction and medium-of-instruction language. The development of knowledge within this plane is explained with the metaphor of apprenticeship, in which individuals take part and newcomers develop mature participation in culturally organized activity (Rogoff, 1995). The endeavors of educators have a shared purpose that is defined in community terms, such as teachers who set goals to meet state standards, improve standardized test scores, or increase parent involvement. Group values are present to appropriately reach the set goals, such as teachers' spending extra time in their classrooms, taking part in professional development, and following the school curriculum and mission statement. The community is grounded in a specialization of roles that positions individuals in different grade levels, on various committees, and in mentor or leadership roles. Inherent rules guide what and how the individual teacher is allowed to teach in the classroom, the extent to which they can collaborate with other teachers, and how grades and test scores play a role in instruction. The institutional plane apprentices a teacher into the social practices of a community of teachers and the educational institution.

The interpersonal plane of teachers involves social communication with colleagues, students, parents, and administrators. Within a community of teachers, the interaction between an individual and his or her social partners is perceived as guided participation (Rogoff, 1995). Communication and collaboration are central to learning, as individuals work together to make sense of activities, search for common ground, and use extensions of their knowledge from previous activities. Engaged in a common purpose for learning and improving practice, teachers form social relationships to manage their own and others' roles and structure situations to observe and participate in cultural activities (Rogoff, 1995). Teachers collaborate within grade-level teams, in the teachers' lounge, and at staff meetings to share ideas, make instructional plans, and discuss challenges. Shaped by institutional practices, a teacher's social interactions with colleagues, administrators, students, and parents guide individual development and participation in the community.

Personal history, past educational experiences, beliefs and values about schooling and culture, attitudes toward students, and pedagogical and subject matter knowledge affect the teacher as an individual. Participatory appropriation allows individuals to participate in cultural activities and change their involvement as a result (Rogoff, 1995). Whereas teachers participate on the community and interpersonal planes, the personal plane considers how teachers transform their understanding and responsibilities for activities through their own active participation. The individual brings in knowledge and experience from previous activities to participation in the present activity, which also affects his or her involvement in future activities. Rogoff (1995) explained, "Any event in the present is an extension of previous events and is directed toward goals that have not yet been accomplished" (p. 155).

A teacher utilizes social and cultural tools, practices, beliefs, and values from previous events to actively participate in the present activity of teacher learning.

*Teacher learning as mediated.* The personal, interpersonal, and institutional planes – and the many social, cultural, and historical practices and processes that affect each plane – come together in collaboration to form the *activity system* (Cole, 1990; Cole & Engeström, 1993), the unit of analysis utilized to study learning and development (Artiles, Trent, Hoffman-Kipp, & López-Torres, 2000). When studying teacher learning, the activity system includes the many variables on the planes described above, including institutional mandates, community context, social relations with colleagues, past classroom experiences, and personal beliefs and values. The various factors that affect the activity system cannot be separated into distinct elements for analysis. To understand the complex mediational structure of an activity system, the activity itself must be the concentration of study (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Rogoff, 2003).

When action is given analytic priority, human beings are viewed as coming into contact with, and creating, their surroundings as well as themselves through the actions in which they engage. Thus action provides the entry point into analysis. This contrasts on the one hand with approaches that treat the individual primarily as a passive recipient of information from the environment, and on the other with approaches that focus on the individual and treat the environment as secondary, serving merely as a device to trigger certain developmental processes. (Wertsch, 1991, p. 8)

Teachers' learning is a "joint, mediated, meaning-making activity" (Cole & Engestrom, 1993, p. 22) that can only be understood with the lens of the activity system made up of the three integral, co-existing planes.

The focus on the activity allows thorough analysis of the intricacies of mediated knowledge. Mediation is the way individuals make sense of the world through use of cultural artifacts, or tools, which have been learned from previous generations and experiences (Cole, 1990; Cole & Engeström, 1993; Engeström, 1999). Cole (1990) explained, "Human beings live in an environment transformed by the artifacts of prior generations, extending back to the beginning of the species. The basic function of these artifacts is to coordinate human beings with the physical world and each other" (p. 91). Teachers mediate their knowledge for practice with artifacts such as curriculum guides, state standards, and other culturally engrained ideas on proper pedagogy and practice. Such tools organize teachers' classroom practice and understanding of appropriate instruction. Through the use of cultural artifacts, "cognition is distributed across people as they collaborate with each other and with tools designed to aid in cognitive work" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 270). The concept of mediation demonstrates the key tenet of sociocultural theory pertinent to this study – teachers co-construct knowledge when engaged in social practice with one another and culturally engrained and relevant tools

Language is the cultural and conceptual tool (Vygotsky, 1978) of keen importance to mediate knowledge and distribute cognition. Learning is inherently social (Bahktin, 1981), which makes language integral to daily social interactions that support and promote learning and development. When voices come together in social settings, Bahktin (1981) described

two competing forms of discourse: (a) the authoritative discourse, or the official doctrine of the larger societal and institutional realm and (b) the internally persuasive discourse, or the ideas and theories of individuals with whom we interact with each day. With the complexities and tensions between the macro- and micro-level discourses, language is used by individuals to take a particular perspective of the world – to enact activities and identities to make meaning of daily life (Gee, 2005). Through my analysis of discourse in this study, I conceptualize language as an integral element of social life (Fairclough, 2003) that “has meaning only in and through social practices” (Gee, 2005, p. 8).

With the sociocultural lens, I designed the study to take into account the cultural, social, collaborative, and mediated aspects of learning. My study highlighted the role of language and discourse in the mediation of knowledge, as I analyzed changes in teachers’ talk over time. As teachers grappled with macro-level institutional policies and micro-level classroom practice in the social setting mediated by cultural artifacts, I investigated the instances in which teachers learned – demonstrated as changes in talk, but not necessarily changes in action. In his definition of learning, Argyris (1993) described how changes in talk occur before changes in action: “Learning is not simply having a new insight or a new idea. Learning occurs when we take effective action, when we detect and correct error” (Argyris, 1993, p. 3). In this study, changes in talk reflected teacher learning in the small group context in so far as they suggested opportunities and possibilities for actionable knowledge in the future (Argyris, 1993).

*Teacher learning in figured worlds.* To conceptualize the complexity of sociocultural theory, I use the theoretical construct of figured worlds (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, &

Cain, 1998). A figured world is a socially and culturally constructed sphere of interpretation used to make sense of daily life. Figured worlds give “the contexts of meaning for actions, cultural productions, performances, disputes, for the understandings that people come to make of themselves, and for the capabilities that people develop to direct their own behavior in these worlds” (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 60). Figured worlds assist in recognition between significant from insignificant events among the complexities and tensions of daily life. A figured world is similar to Discourse with a capital-D (Gee, 2005), in that it provides a combination and integration of “language, action, interaction, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places together in such a way that others recognize you as a particular type of who (identity) engaged in a particular type of what (activity)” (Gee, 2005, p. 27).

Cultural models are conceptualizations of figured worlds (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 55). Holland and Quinn (1987) described cultural models as “presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it” (p. 4). In other words, cultural models are oversimplified theories that individuals use to make sense of the complex world and their experiences in it. Often used unconsciously, cultural models help individuals make meaning and take action in everyday life – one’s view of the world, including what is appropriate from that viewpoint, shapes how he or she situates meaning for a given context.

Whereas an individual cultural model is a generalization made from past experience that is more likely to change, figured worlds focus on lived worlds and have more durability over time. In this way, cultural models posit a figured world, or “a simplified world

populated by a set of agents who engage in a limited range of important acts as moved by a specific set of forces” (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 102). Going beyond the individual belief system to mediate between the personal, interpersonal, and institutional planes of teacher learning, cultural models as a tool of inquiry demonstrates the meditation between the micro-level of interaction and the macro-level of institutions (Gee, 2005). Many teachers do not realize that their familiar world is built entirely upon assumptions and expectations which control both individuals’ actions and interpretations of other’s actions.

Although figured worlds provide a framework to interpret and make meaning of daily life, individuals have the capacity to enact socially situated identities, or ways of participating in social groups, cultures, and institutions (Gee, 2005). Holland and colleagues (1998) conceptualized situated identities as those that trace participation in figured worlds. Socially organized and reproduced, a figured world creates boundaries that divide and relate individual participants into social roles or positions; however, individuals are capable and competent to change their participation within the figured world. As described by Rogoff (1997, 2003), learning is demonstrated through the change in participation over time, such as shifting identification with the figured world or transforming of socially constructed roles. In summary, whereas socially and culturally figured worlds provide a realm of interpretation to make sense of daily life, individuals have the ability to identify and participate in their own way within the figured world.

### *Review of the Literature*

In this section, I review the related literature of teacher learning research specific to ELLs. The literature review is made up of three main sections, organized by the research

question topics: (a) Teachers' Cultural Models of English Language Learners, (b) Teachers' Identities and Teaching English Language Learners, and (c) Teacher Learning and English Language Learners. In each section, I outline the extant research found through computer and library searches, pertinent teacher preparation journals, bibliographies from related studies, and a recent review of the literature on teacher preparation for ELLs (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). I used the following criteria for inclusion within the literature review: Investigations had to have been (a) empirical studies, (b) in the U.S., (c) with K-12 teachers, (d) focused on linguistic diversity (e.g., students were ELLs) rather than the broad field of cultural diversity (e.g., ethnically diverse, minority students). Following suggestions for a sound dissertation literature review (Boone & Beile, 2005; Roberts, 2004), the majority of the studies were published in the past five years, and selected literature anchors the discussion in the historical context of English-only policy and teacher preparation for ELLs.

#### *Teachers' Cultural Models of English Language Learners*

My study utilizes cultural models as a tool of inquiry to examine teachers' discourse about ELLs, language, and learning. Studies in educational research have analyzed cultural models espoused by parents (Bialostok, 2008; Martínez-Roldán & Malavé, 2004), students (Davis, 2007), and teachers (Bryan & Atwater, 2002; Keys & Bryan, 2000; Marsh, 2004; Varghese, 2008); however, no study has used cultural models to conceptualize teacher learning about ELLs with institutional pressures from English-only policies. Therefore, in this section, I include literature on teachers and ELLs that does not specifically use cultural models as an inquiry tool but attempts to capture the macro- and micro-level connection between policy and practice. This portion of the literature review is organized in the



following sections: (a) Teachers' beliefs and attitudes, (b) Teachers' implementation of language policy, (c) teachers' cultural models, and (d) cultural models and my research.

*Teachers' beliefs and attitudes.* Scholars disagree on the role that teachers' beliefs and attitudes play in teacher learning and classroom practice. Although Richardson (1996) declared teachers' attitudes to be weak indicators of teacher learning, other scholars consider them to be substantive determiners of the instruction of diverse populations (Cummins, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Specific to the instruction of ELLs, teachers' beliefs and attitudes are deemed important, as positive attitudes translate to motivation to engage with ELLs and enthusiasm for ELL specific professional development (Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004). I contend that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are less valuable than cultural models, as the construct of beliefs and attitudes often fails to move beyond the individual teacher to connect with wider social and institutional forces.

The analysis of teachers' beliefs and attitudes often explores general trends across teacher groups. Karabenick and Clemens Noda (2004) surveyed 729 teachers in a Midwestern suburban school district with a recent influx of immigrant and refugee ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Based on quantitative survey data, findings indicated that teachers were relatively positive about teaching ELLs but less confident to meet their instructional needs in the classroom. Because the self-reported data reflected a general trend of positive attitudes toward ELLs, the researchers declared the primary need across the district was for professional development on ELL instructional methods. The authors used the inquiry to ground district professional development in the needs of teachers and focus

on ELL instruction. Nevertheless, the self-reported data broadly implicated that all 729 teachers were positive about teaching ELLs without scrutinizing individual teacher attitudes.

Rather than look for broad trends, other studies utilize teachers' beliefs and attitudes to make connections with individual teacher traits. In a study of elementary teachers in Arizona (García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005), patterns were evident among individual teachers who held negative attitudes toward the Spanish language and its use in the classroom. After surveying 152 teachers individually and a 15-teacher focus group, García-Nevarez and colleagues (2005) found that teachers' attitudes differed by type of certification, length of time teaching, and cultural and linguistic background. The most positive teachers were Latino, bilingual, and certified in bilingual education. Teachers who tended to be negative were White, monolingual, certified in English as a Second Language (ESL) or mainstream education, and had been teaching longer. Although this study moved beyond broad trends to examine specific factors affecting teacher attitudes toward ELLs, the authors failed to explore the complexities of individual teachers and similarly resulted in generalizations of teachers within specific categories. The weaknesses of this study are inherent to the use of teachers' attitudes as a unit of analysis, relying on self-reported data and failing to connect to macro-level issues (e.g. language policies, dominant cultural models).

*Teachers' implementation of language policy.* Whereas studies of teachers' beliefs and attitudes examine individual teachers and leave out the link to social and institutional forces, research on teachers' policy implementation explicitly connects macro-level policy and micro-level classroom practice. The majority of language policy implementation research

comes from California districts, schools, and classrooms in the years following Proposition 227, the Californian counterpart of Arizona's Proposition 203 (i.e. English-only educational language policy). The limelight has not been equally received in the neighboring state of Arizona, which produced only one policy implementation study (Wright & Choi, 2006). Although some research after Proposition 227 in California outlined teachers' thoughts and opinions (Arellano-Houchin, Flamenco, Merlos, & Segura, 2001; Palmer & García, 2000; Schirling, Contreras, & Ayala, 2000), others dug deeper to connect policy and practice and to understand how language mandates were played out across districts, schools, and classrooms; I review these below.

Reflecting a wider institutional lens, some policy research compared implementation of Proposition 227 in districts with teacher enactment of policy as one facet of larger studies (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Asato, 2000; Maxwell-Jolly, 2000). Through interviews with staff at seven northern California districts in both rural and urban areas, Maxwell-Jolly (2000) maintained that implementation varied by the district's history of support for bilingual education and primary language instruction. Although teachers shared individual frustrations, such as a lack of training and materials, the implementation was conceived as top-down and discrepancies were based on factors at the district level. Conversely, Gutiérrez and colleagues (2000) found that variance in policy implementation occurred at the school level, based on language ideology. Using language ideology as an inquiry tool, the research connected the English monolingualism societal discourse with the implementation of English-only policies at schools. Schools operating under language ideologies of English monolingualism were more rigid in the enactment of Proposition 227 than schools with bilingual language

ideologies. The comparative studies at the school and district levels made issue of the discrepancy in policy implementation and resulting ELL instruction. Although these authors lobbied to amend the language policy based on differences at school and district levels, my study emphasizes the possibility for change at the teacher level.

Other California-based research narrowed the concentration to understand how individual teachers implemented Proposition 227 in the classroom. Researchers analyzed the effects of language policy on bilingual teachers and their policy implementation (Alamillo & Viramontes, 2000; Valdez, 2001). Based on interview data with 20 bilingual teachers, Valdez (2001) outlined the challenges, frustrations, and hostility that bilingual educators faced post-Proposition 227. Alamillo and Viramontes (2000) surveyed 77 teachers from various backgrounds and, similar to Valdez's work, found that bilingual teachers had lower morale and felt devalued due to English-only mandates. Both studies demonstrated that bilingual teachers implemented English-only policy distinct from mainstream teachers, as bilingual teachers' practice continued to be grounded in bilingual pedagogy and advocacy for ELLs. Like much of the research on Proposition 227, both studies occurred directly after policy implementation in 1998, conceivably before dominant discourses of English monolingualism became engrained in daily practice. Conducted directly after policy implementation, my study analyzes factors other than bilingualism to understand teachers' mediation of language policy and practice.

Bilingualism was not the only factor found to affect teachers' enactment of Proposition 227. Stritikus and García (2000) observed implementation variance based on teachers' language ideologies, which resulted in three types of teacher reaction: defiance,

clarification, and anxiety. Based on interviews with 32 teachers in eight California districts representative of the state population, they discovered that teachers' reactions were informed by individual characteristics. For example, those outwardly defiant to the new language policy typically had bilingual certification, had strong ideological and political beliefs, and taught in a school context that continued to use bilingual programs and pedagogical approaches. Similarly, Stritikus (2002) found that teachers differed in their negotiation of the demands of Proposition 227 based on their beliefs about students' needs, ideological orientation to the students' language and culture, and structure of policy implementation at their schools. Authors of both studies realized that Proposition 227 looked different in each classroom based on the above described variables, including past experience with cultural and linguistic difference, ideological and political beliefs, and school context and language policy enactment. While the authors demonstrate variables in teacher enactment of policy, I take the research further to add analysis on how teacher make sense of policy to better meet the needs of ELLs in the classroom.

Aside from the research on California districts, schools, and teachers after Proposition 227, there are few investigations of teacher enactment of language policy in other locations across the U.S. DeJong (2008) interviewed 18 bilingual teachers after the implementation of English-only language policy in Massachusetts and found that variance in policy appropriation led to daily contradictions negotiated by teachers. The study discerned that teachers were not passive receptors of policy, as they utilized agency to make decisions when contradictions arose, such as using native language in instruction and emphasizing the importance of bilingualism to parents. The study only scratched the surface of policy

implementation in Massachusetts, due to the self-reporting data from only bilingual teachers and thematic analysis that failed to connect with wider institutional discourse. In Arizona, Wright and Choi (2006) surveyed third-grade teachers across the state regarding school language and accountability policies under Proposition 203. Their findings revealed that policies led to confusion and little evidence of ELL achievement. Although the study finally brought the focus to Arizona, the study occurred in a very different policy context before the prescriptive, four-hour ELD approach. My research takes place within the contemporary realities of language policies that affect ELL instruction.

*Teachers' cultural models.* Of the studies that connect policy and practice, only one utilized cultural models as a unit of inquiry to understand teachers' implementation of language policy. From interviews with four bilingual Latino teachers, Varghese (2008) used cultural models to understand the enactment of bilingual policies in classroom instruction. Varghese found that the teachers held similar cultural models of Spanish and English but different cultural models of bilingual education, which led to inconsistent enactment of bilingual education policies in the classroom. Teachers who valued bilingualism did not necessarily conceptualize bilingual education in the same manner, which resulted in different implementation in individual classrooms. Although the author's unit of inquiry explicitly linked policy and practice, the study presented the cultural models as firm predictors of policy enactment and did not allow for teachers to change within the broader institutional context.

*Cultural models and my research.* My study contributes to the literature on teachers' cultural models of ELLs for several reasons. First, my study utilizes cultural models as an

inquiry tool to make sense of the complexities of teachers' discourse that is mediated on all three planes of teacher learning – the personal, interpersonal, and institutional planes.

Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) asserted, “There have been few systematic attempts to examine the political and ideological dimensions of educators’ ‘beliefs,’ ‘assumptions,’ and ‘unconscious perceptions,’ and how these worldviews are part of a particular ideological orientation” (p. 51). Through the use of cultural models, my research ties teachers’ beliefs and perceptions with the policies and ideologies of the larger societal and educational institution. Second, my study brings a contemporary lens to the research on teachers’ implementation of language policy and gives attention to current language policies affecting ELD teachers at Arizona schools. Based on my review of the literature, my study will be the first to analyze teachers’ enactment of the four-hour, skill-based ELD mandates initiated in the 2008-2009 school year. Finally, the research does not stop at analyzing discourse to uncover cultural models but goes beyond to support teachers in exploring the connections between policy and practice

#### *Teachers’ Identities and Teaching English Language Learners*

In recent years in educational research, studies have incorporated teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, life histories, and personal narratives into understanding teachers’ identities and identity formation (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Whereas beliefs and attitudes are criticized as weak gauge of teacher learning (Richardson, 1996), identity is a strong indicator of learning that digs deeper to understand the complexity of teachers. Teacher identity research has considered the complex roles of teachers, including teachers’ professional identity (Conteh, 2007), new teacher identity (Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004) and reading

coach identity (Assaf, 2008). The research specific to teacher identity and teaching ELLs falls into two realms described here. This portion of the literature review is organized in the following sections: (a) Culture and language background, (b) Political and ideological orientation, and (c) Identity and my research.

*Culture and language background.* Some scholars purport that culturally diverse teachers are best suited to teach ELLs – using personal experiences with cultural difference to connect with students from similar backgrounds. Maxwell-Jolly and Gándara (2002) contended that Latino teachers are inherently more equipped to work with ELLs and insinuate that improved preparation is needed only for European American teachers. Their contention reflects that teachers’ cultural and linguistic identities play a role in classroom instruction.

The study of White, monolingual teachers’ identities led Haddix (2008) to assert the importance of sociolinguistic coursework in teacher preparation. In a qualitative study of two teachers, Haddix discovered that White, monolingual teachers perceived their identities as without character or ethnicity. He tied their individual perceptions to dominant language ideologies that positioned them as “culture-less and language-less” (Haddix, 2008, p. 256). Haddix contended that sociolinguistics courses allowed teachers to deconstruct the “standard language and color blind ideologies” (Haddix, 2008, p. 266) that existed in the teacher preparation program, which affected teachers’ work with ELLs. Haddix’s study was strengthened by the combination of identity and teacher learning – probing teacher identity mediated by dominant societal discourse and making connections with teacher learning for ELL instruction; however, the small sample limited his findings and overlooked the



existence of diversity among White teachers. I further critique the one-course approach to preservice teacher education in the section on teacher learning and ELLs.

Rather than focus on mainstream teachers, Weisman (2001) studied the bicultural identities and language attitudes of four Latina teachers. After conducting interviews with four young, bilingual classroom teachers, the author highlighted distinctions among the teachers' bicultural identities – primarily how they dealt with pressures from the dominant society. Weisman perceived teachers who embraced their culture and language to counter the monolingual language ideologies and assimilationist tendencies that occurred in classrooms. Teachers who conformed or identified with the dominant culture failed to “acknowledge the discriminatory attitudes and practices that shape the schooling experiences of subordinate groups” (Weisman, 2001, p. 221). The findings demonstrated that Latino teachers with strong ties to their culture and language were more likely to affirm and relate to the identities of Latino students. Weisman used the results to call for professional development programs focusing on issues of bicultural development and language domination. My study contributes to the literature by including the voices of White and Latino teachers in the same study.

*Political and ideological orientation.* Moving beyond cultural and linguistic identities, research also considers political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001) to determine which teachers are better suited to teach Latino students. Although this research does not fit the original literature review criteria, due to the focus on cultural rather than linguistic diversity, I include the two studies based on the significance to the identity findings from my research.

Moving beyond a unilateral depiction of Latino teachers, Urrieta (2007) identified a distinction between identities of Mexican American teachers and Chicano activist educators. Urrieta conceptualized identity as not inherent at birth based on cultural background but as consciously assumed through participation in figured worlds of Chicano activism at universities, in social groups, and through other life experiences. In his study of 24 Chicano activist educators, he utilized ethnographic and life history interviews to understand how Mexican Americans came to embrace an activist identity. Urrieta implicated the need for more teachers with activist identities, due to their infusion of social justice in the classroom and the desire to raise consciousness to give back to their communities. The research deconstructed the simplified viewpoint that all diverse teachers are created equal and showed the importance of activism as a part of an educator's identity. My study extends this work by incorporating viewpoints from both White and Latino educators and connects specifically to classroom practice with ELLs.

In another study, the lens of teacher advocacy was applied to teachers from various ethnic backgrounds. Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) focused on four exemplary educators to describe their ideological beliefs and attitudes about effective instruction for Latino high school students. Through open-ended interviews, the authors found that Latino academic achievement came largely from teachers' political and ideological clarity. Successful teachers interrogated social issues, rejected assimilationist and deficit viewpoints, questioned romanticized views of dominant culture, and incorporated culture into the classroom. The study asserted the need for teachers to explore and comprehend political and ideological issues in education to become advocates for Latino students. My research builds on this

study by specifically connecting teachers' political and ideological clarity to teaching ELLs and teacher learning.

*Identity and my research.* My research contributes to the literature on teachers' identities and teaching ELLs. First, my study does not limit the sample to one ethnic group and rather incorporates a more diverse array of teachers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Second, my research does not limit identity to only being cultural in nature; identity is socially situated (Gee, 2005), not a distinct set of categories to assign based on ethnicity. Finally, my study concentrates specifically on teachers' identities and teaching ELLs rather than the broader group of culturally diverse students.

#### *Teacher Learning and English Language Learners*

There is a rich pool of literature considering how teachers learn to serve culturally diverse students (Banks *et al.*, 2005; Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004, Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Within this corpus of literature, language is considered one of many aspects of culture and often gets "lost in the larger fabric of culturally responsive teacher preparation" (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008, p. 606). Linguistic diversity in the classroom results in distinctive challenges for teachers and warrants in-depth exploration and preparation to understand the unique backgrounds and needs of ELLs. To adequately prepare teachers for work with ELLs, research must be devoted specifically to teacher learning for linguistic diversity; however, the literature on teacher learning and ELLs is limited. This final portion of the literature review on teacher learning and ELLs is organized in the following sections: (a) Preservice teacher learning, (b) Inservice teacher learning, (c) Small-group teacher learning, and (d) Teacher learning and my research.

*Preservice teacher learning.* Of the scant literature on teacher learning and ELLs, the bulk deals with preservice teachers. In *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* (2005), the authors of the chapter “Enhancing the Development of Students’ Language(s)” set forward ideas to enhance preservice teacher preparation for ELLs (Valdés, Bunch, Snow, Lee, & Matos, 2005). They asserted that teachers must understand big ideas about language, including dialectical differences, language variations, and unique language demands of various disciplines. The authors proposed an introductory linguistics course, followed by integration of language education throughout different curricular strands of teacher education programs. Other investigators also gave suggestions for university-based teacher preparation for ELLs, including a linguistic course (Ann & Peng, 2005), integration of linguistic diversity into coursework (Nevarez-LaToree, Sanford-DeShields, Sounday, Leonard, & Woyshner, 2008), incorporation of social justice issues (Balderrama, 2001), linguistically responsive pedagogical practices (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-González, 2008), and ELL instructional strategies (Commins & Miramontes, 2006). Although recommendations for teacher preparation may be grounded in research on ELLs, empirical studies have been lacking to determine whether teacher learning occurs based on given suggestions. The literature review includes empirical studies of preservice teacher learning at the program, course, and field experience levels.

One body of research measured the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. University of Massachusetts at Amherst faculty members (Gebhard, Austin, Nieto, & Willett, 2002) described the preservice teacher preparation program that incorporated social justice and diversity issues throughout preservice coursework. Through interviews with five current and former students, authors found that teachers from their program were aptly prepared to

teach culturally diverse students; however, the findings demonstrated weakness in ELL instruction, as students did not pick up on the link between culture and language that faculty members attempted to portray. Researchers attributed this finding to dominant discourse: “Language minority students are especially vulnerable in this climate of standardization because their language strengths are frequently overlooked in the rush to ‘pass the test’” (Gebhard *et al.*, 2002, p. 241). Although the study provided information to faculty to be cognizant of needed changes, the program only displayed strengths in educating for cultural diversity and not specifically ELLs.

Another study of a preservice teacher preparation examined a California university program that infused ELL specific topics and strategies into all coursework (DeOliveria & Athanases, 2007). The five-year investigation of the teacher education program surveyed over 300 graduates, analyzed program documentation, and conducted focus groups to understand how the program prepared teachers for work in the classroom with ELLs. The study found that graduates were advocates both inside and outside of the classroom, as demonstrated by their creation and maintenance of a safe classroom environment, diversification of instruction for ELLs, response to sociopolitical issues, and encouragement to foster bilingualism and biliteracy. Findings demonstrated the benefit of incorporating ELL instruction throughout an undergraduate program, but the authors admitted the data were skewed, as participants began with a positive view of the program.

Although these investigations were conducted considering teacher learning at the program level, other research hones in on ELL preparation at the course level. With a lens on preservice teachers in Arizona, Olson and Jimenez-Silva (2008) examined teacher learning

in a state-mandated SEI course. Using the unit of analysis of teacher beliefs, which was critiqued above, the study demonstrated change in teacher beliefs on ELLs from the beginning to the end of the course. The authors contended that the shift in teacher beliefs occurred due to the course instructor's attitude and willingness to depart from the state-mandated course content. After the collection and preliminary analysis of self-reported survey data, they claimed that: "When students feel good about themselves, their knowledge, and their learning, there is a higher probability that they will change their decision making processes and practices in their future classrooms" (Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008, p. 258). This claim was not validated, because no empirical data or prior research backed up the assertion. Nevertheless, the research attempted to show teacher learning through change in beliefs over the duration of one preservice SEI course.

The combination of mainstream and bilingual education teachers within a preservice course took the spotlight in research by Evans, Arnot-Hopffer, and Jurich (2005). Cognizant of the divide between bilingual and mainstream teachers, the researchers combined 18 mainstream and 10 bilingual education students in coursework for one semester during their senior year of undergraduate study. Based on course documentation, field notes by the instructor and researchers, and student-written reflections, researchers concluded that the combination led to richer multicultural discussion that debated and blurred the lines between mainstream and minority students and teachers. Nevertheless, the integration led to teacher learning about cultural diversity rather than linguistic diversity, as the presence of mainstream teachers led to a diminished focus on ELLs. Evans and colleagues called for the combination of bilingual and mainstream teachers for coursework not specific to ELLs, as

bilingual teachers contributed ideas on cultural diversity, but mainstream teachers did not have the same need to learn about ELLs.

Shifting to instructional experiences within a course, Abbate-Vaughn (2008) studied preservice teachers' discourse to determine the efficacy of various teaching strategies within her course. After collecting student journals and projects, course field notes, and email correspondence, the researcher established that her coursework was indeed effective to prepare teachers for work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Three facets characterized her course: process writing to deconstruct past notions on diverse communities, discussion based on ethnic autobiographical literature, and incorporation of urban field experience. Although Abbate-Vaughn showed the power of certain activities in one course, her study failed to regard linguistic diversity as anything more than another variable of cultural diversity; however, the research called for meaningful changes to preservice education, including mandatory exposure to diverse schools and a connection between coursework and field experience.

The role of field experience has also been the focus of preservice teacher learning research. Bollin (2007) explored service learning with immigrant students as part of teacher education, where preservice teachers tutored struggling young ELLs. From content analysis of 110 preservice teachers' journal entries, five themes emerged: taking multiple perspectives, appreciating the Hispanic culture, having empathy for others, teaching diverse children, and being aware of stereotypes and social injustices. Bollin found that preservice teachers better understood and respected the lives of immigrant families and increased confidence in instruction of diverse students. Although the study specifically incorporated preservice

teachers' work with ELLs, the findings only involved cultural diversity and excluded specific reference to linguistic diversity.

The above research addresses various areas of preservice teacher preparation for working with ELLs; however, the sole concentration on undergraduate education courses and programs fail to make the connection with the classroom in which inservice teachers are charged with the daily responsibility to educate ELLs. I found one study that sought to connect preservice teacher learning to first year classroom teaching. Poynor (2005) longitudinally followed two teachers through their reading methods courses, student teaching, and first year of teaching to understand the transfer of preservice knowledge to classroom instruction. After qualitative data collection and narrative analysis, the study uncovered tensions and contradictions between theories of ELL instruction from methods courses and the practice carried out in classrooms. Poynor found that preservice knowledge did not transfer, as coursework did not emphasize what theory looked like in practice, student teaching allowed no control over theory or practice, and other pressures took priority in the first year of teaching, such as adhering to policies and preparing students for standardized tests. Although the study was weakened by the small sample and surface-level analysis, the findings confirmed the importance of research on inservice teacher learning, as top-down pressures in the form of language policies and mandates often take precedence over the good pedagogy for ELLs learned in preservice teacher preparation.

*Inservice teacher learning.* Scholars have described the dearth of research on teacher learning and ELLs (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Zeichner, 2005). Of the literature that does exist, the majority includes an investigation of preservice teacher learning and has been



described in the previous section; however, as Poynor's (2005) study demonstrates, preservice teacher preparation is not guaranteed to transfer to inservice teacher practice. Nevertheless, researchers continue to concentrate on preservice teacher learning and fail to understand the integral area of inservice teacher learning. Two studies with inservice teachers and ELLs are described below.

Research conducted with one group of urban inservice teachers aimed to develop an executable model for the theoretical ideas of sheltered instruction, an approach to instruction that aims for ELLs to learn content and English simultaneously. Researchers of the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008) observed teachers to refine the protocol to (a) evaluate teachers' instruction and (b) provide a model for teachers' lesson plans. Framed with the behaviorist lens, the study yielded a one-size-fits-all approach to inservice teacher preparation for ELLs. Only quantitative data were collected, which relied on statistical analyses of how closely teachers implemented the SIOP model. The resulting professional development model placed teachers as passive recipients of knowledge, as the authors set up teacher learning through "professional development videos, training manuals, and other materials" (Echevarría *et al.*, 2008, p. 239). The behaviorist framework, paired with the deficit language toward ELLs throughout the study, deducted from the validity of this teacher learning study.

Wider institutional aspects of teacher professional development are highlighted by González and Darling Hammond (2000) in their review of successful approaches for inservice teacher learning about ELLs. They described contexts and curriculums of what they considered to be successful programs to teach educators about ELLs. The authors

explained one inservice program that prepared teachers to work effectively with ELLs. The context described is an international high school with students from more than 50 countries speaking 35 languages. The authors put forth that this unique, linguistically diverse setting was the impetus for the teacher learning that occurred; however, this finding did not demonstrate how teachers learn about ELLs in other settings, where the ELL population is more homogenized, which is the reality for the large majority of schools in Arizona.

*Small-group teacher learning.* As sociocultural theory focuses on collaboration and social interaction as the impetus to teacher learning, there is a plethora of research on teacher learning communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). Various small-group contexts are used to promote teacher learning, including communities of practice (Gallucci, 2003; Little, 2002), book clubs (Florio-Ruane, Raphael, Glazier, McVee, & Wallace, 1997; Glazier *et al.*, 2000), and study groups (Birchak *et al.*, 1998; Dyson, 1997; Smith & Hudelson, 2001). Many studies investigate the use of small groups for teacher learning about culturally diverse students (Florio-Ruane, 2001; Lewis & Ketter, 2004; McVee, 2004; Rodgers & Mosely, 2008); however, the small-group approach to support teacher learning specifically for linguistically diverse students and ELLs is rarely studied.

Due to the institutional reliance on behaviorist approaches to professional development, I located only one study that utilized a school-site, small-group approach to teacher learning for ELLs. Dubetz (2005) studied a collaborative teacher development project that sought to improve bilingual classroom instruction. The eight-month study group took place at a Professional Development School, an elementary school with a close working relationship and partnership with the university, and included inservice teachers, student

teachers, paraprofessionals, coaches, and teacher educators. The study group aimed to give teachers an opportunity to share challenges and solve problems collaboratively. After thematic analysis of the study group dialogue, the findings outlined the different lines of inquiry that evolved – starting with planning for bilingual instruction and shifting to ESL content instruction. Although the research focused on themes in discussion topics, Dubetz only briefly described one teacher’s change over time, as the teacher moved away from deficit-based discourse about one student. The study showed the possibilities of the study group context for teacher learning but was distinct from my research in the concentration on bilingual classroom contexts and pedagogy, the lack of institutional policies and pressures, and the miniscule attention given to actual teacher learning.

*Teacher learning and my research.* The present study will add to the literature on teacher learning about ELLs. First, my study focuses on inservice teachers that are currently in the classroom with all ELL students. Due to negative public discourse, English-only policy, and the ELD instructional model, inservice teachers may harbor cultural models that can detriment the instruction given in their classrooms. Second, my research considers teacher learning in a small group, collaborative setting rather than a concentration on larger institutional or behaviorist forms of teacher learning. Third, my study analyzes teacher learning of both White and Latino teachers, whereas most teacher learning research focuses predominantly on White teachers as the only ones in need of preparation for ELLs. This reflects a hole in teacher learning research, as the assumption creates an implied dichotomy among teachers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

*Conclusion*

My study contributes in many ways to the literature on teacher learning and ELLs and corresponds with the recent changes to ELL instructional policies and mandates. Framed in the sociocultural theory of learning, my research at Maravilla School aims to uncover teachers' cultural models of ELLs in their discourse, analyze how situated identity mediates that discourse, and understand how teachers learn about ELLs through a school-site, teacher study group. My study contributes to crucial areas of teacher learning research, including concentration on teachers' implementation of contemporary language policy, teachers' situated identities specific to work with ELLs, and inservice, small-group teacher learning for ELLs. In addition to filling gaps in the current literature, I bring together the three areas of research on teacher preparation for ELLs in this study – teachers' cultural models, situated identity, and teacher learning. In a time of a mandated language policy implementation in Arizona, this study aims to examine how teachers grapple with policies and notions of teaching and learning language and determine how educators can learn about teaching ELLs in a small-group setting. The following questions drive this research:

- What are the cultural models reflected in teachers' discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' different situated identities (e.g., teachers, citizens) mediate their discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' discourses and cultural models on language, learning, and ELLs change when introduced to new tools and ideas in a small group?

The next chapter outlines the methodology used to collect and analyze data to answer the research questions.

## CHAPTER 3

### Examining Small-group Teacher Learning: Methods, Context, and Participants

This chapter outlines the case study design and methods (Yin, 2003) that guided this research. The case study of the ELD teacher study group at Maravilla School captures the intricate complexity of one local, sociocultural context (Stake, 1997) and retains the “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 2). In this chapter, I give the details of the case study, including the teacher study group design, qualitative data collection, and discourse analysis. I also introduce Maravilla School and the seven educators who took part in the teacher study group there. The chapter is organized in the following sections: (a) Teacher Study Group Design, (b) Data Collection, (c) Data Analysis, (d) Context, and (e) Participants.

#### *Teacher Study Group Design*

Grounded in the sociocultural tenets of teacher learning, a teacher study group is a learning community where educators come together to discuss and solve problems that affect classroom practice. The teacher study group perceives teachers as rich sources of professional knowledge and allows reflection and engagement in meaningful dialogue on issues that affect their classrooms. Using the comparison to behaviorist teacher inservices for professional development, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) explained the importance of teacher learning in small-group settings: “Instead of prescriptive mandates of packaged programs, teachers need time to work with each other to think, analyze, and create conditions for change in their specific circumstances and in ways that fit their own needs” (p. 3). The teacher study group design promotes dialogue for teachers to “investigate their own assumptions, their own teaching and curriculum development, and the policies and practices of their own schools and communities” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998, p. 278).

To field test and refine the design and methods for my research, I conducted a pilot study in May of 2007. Yin (2003) explained that the pilot of a case study is meant to be formative, specifically used to assist in the development of relevant lines of questions and topics for data collection. Working with a small group of elementary teachers at another urban Arizona school, I held two small-group meetings to informally dialogue about ELLs in the classroom. The small-group sessions were both audio-taped and video-taped, and I kept a journal detailing my thoughts and interactions directly following the discussions. Findings from the pilot study group meetings suggested the need for (a) structure and expectations to keep the participants on task and (b) defined inquiry topics and mediating artifacts to incite meaningful discussions. Specifically, I could see that informal small-group conversation was inadequate; therefore, I chose to implement the more structured, inquiry-based teacher study group. Further, I used my experience in the pilot to design an efficient and organized way to catalog the multiple forms of data collected in the dissertation research.

After completing the pilot study, I sought out possible locations to conduct my dissertation research. To best answer the research questions, I established criteria for site selection, which included the following: (a) an Arizona urban setting within the metropolitan city limits, (b) an elementary school, and (c) a large ELL population (i.e., 25% of total students or more). Maravilla School met the selection criteria; the principal, Mr. Erick Johnson, welcomed me to conduct my research during implementation of the ELD mandates in the 2008-2009 school year. In July 2008, I attended a Maravilla School staff meeting to invite teachers to participate in the ELD teacher study group. With all of the ELD teachers at Maravilla present, I explained my research and an overview of the ELD

teacher study group. After the verbal and written presentation of information, willing teachers signed the necessary forms (i.e., consent and information forms for Institutional Review Board) before leaving. Of the 18 ELD teachers at Maravilla School, six made a voluntary commitment to participate in the study group over the course of the semester (see Table 1). In addition, one of the school instructional coaches joined during our first study group meeting, for a total of seven participants from the Maravilla staff.



Table 1

*Participant overview, by years of teaching experience.*

Participant Pseudonym	Years of Teaching Experience	Degrees Attained	Language Abilities
Cristy	14	B.A. (Elementary Education + ESL Endorsement) M.Ed. (Elementary Education + Reading Endorsement)	English (fluent) Spanish (conversational)
Erica	7	B.A. (Elementary Education) M.Ed. (Curriculum & Instruction, Bilingual Education emphasis)	Spanish (fluent) English (fluent)
Joni	7	B.A. (English); Teaching certification; M.Ed. (started coursework)	English (fluent); French (conversational); Spanish (conversational)
Andrea	5	B.A. (Child Development & Community Health) M.Ed. (Curriculum & Instruction)	English (fluent) Spanish (fluent)
Gisela	4	B.A. (Elementary Education, Multilingual/Multicultural emphasis)	English (fluent)
Molly	3	B.A. (Economics, Chinese); Teaching certification	English (fluent) Chinese (fluent) French (fluent)
Marcy	1	B.A. (Elementary Education); M.Ed. (ESL)	English (fluent)

### *Data Collection*

This case study utilized qualitative methods of data collection, as the research questions and theoretical framework required in-depth understanding of local discourse and social interaction among a focused sample of teachers. In order to ensure case study validity, I also sought multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003) to enrich the data and situate the discourse within the larger social, cultural, and historical context. In total, the data include the following:

- Audio and video recordings and transcriptions of seven small-group sessions;
- Audio recordings and transcriptions of 14 individual interviews;
- Documentation, including state documents, school documents, and news articles;
- Researcher memos from participant observation in various school settings;
- Field notes from direct observation of state and school ELD trainings.

The data allowed me to deeply understand and study the case of the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. As described in the previous chapter, sociocultural theory perceives learning as taking place on three planes that coexist – the institutional, interpersonal, and personal planes – to account for the complex nature of the many social and cultural factors that affect the cognition of an individual (Rogoff, 2003). Although learning may be visible on one plane, the others are also present in the background and play a role in the learning that occurs (Tharp, 1997). My unit of analysis was the teacher study group; however, each of the

mutually constituting planes must be considered for a complete account of teacher learning. Therefore, I collected data to reflect the different planes from individual interviews, teacher study group meetings, and institutional documentation and observation.

*Interviews.* My data collection both started and ended with interviews to develop an understanding of the teachers' unique personal planes. The initial interviews aimed to get to know the teacher on a personal and professional level and gauge a starting point for the small-group discussions (see Appendix B for Initial Interview Protocol). Spradley (1979) describes the purpose of the interview as twofold – (a) to develop rapport between the researcher and participant and (b) to elicit and collect information. The two processes are complementary, as rapport encourages open dialogue and eliciting information strengthens rapport. In my study, I utilized the initial interview to foster rapport with each of the teacher participants to encourage them to feel like colleagues and collaborators (Mishler, 1986) to receive the most comprehensive account of their story (Erickson, 1986). The conversations were designed specifically to get to know and value each teacher as an individual and expert, then to probe deeper into her needs and ideas about ELLs and the ELD teacher study group.

The initial interviews allowed teachers to share their personal stories as to how they arrived at the career of teaching and their ongoing course of professional learning. With the focus on their development as a teacher, I learned more about the personal and professional history of the individual while giving the participant an opportunity to craft and construct her own narrative to make sense of her own life story (Carter, 1993; Mishler, 1986). Knowing that the teacher's story is a joint discourse between two speakers, I was cognizant

that my questions played a role in the responses given. With a balance between life history and focused interviewing, I asked clear questions that encouraged teachers to dive deeply into narrative and take control of the dialogue (Mishler, 1986). After broad questions to elicit an overarching personal narrative, I then inquired about experiences and beliefs specific to the instruction of ELLs to tap into beliefs and assumptions about students. Through the initial interviews, I became acquainted with the teachers' personal and professional lives and their cultural models of ELLs, language and learning.

At the final stage of data collection, the exit interviews served three main purposes – (a) to member check the initial findings from the data analysis, (b) to have teachers reflect on their own learning in the teacher study group, and (c) to ask specific questions to individual teachers to ensure an accurate description of their backgrounds and collect more data that were aligned to the research questions (see Appendix C for an example of Andrea's Exit Interview Protocol). The exit interview data added additional sources of evidence and gave informants a voice in the data analysis; therefore, it strengthened the construct validity of the case study (Yin, 2003).

The initial and exit interviews took place at Maravilla School, scheduled at a time of the teachers' convenience either before or after school. To maintain confidentiality, we met in closed classrooms with minimal or no interruptions. Audio files of the interviews were collected by means of a digital voice recorder and transferred to my personal computer. The audio files were transcribed into rich text files and stored and organized with the *Nudist Vivo*, or *N-Vivo*, program (Richards, 2002). I ensured confidentiality of all study data by storing all files on a password-protected computer and in a combination-protected safe.

*Teacher study group meetings.* Following the suggestions of Birchak and colleagues (1998), I framed the teacher study group to value the participants as experts and provide support for productive and supportive conversation. The study group aimed to be a locale where we came together to discuss various topics related to teaching in the ELD classroom (see Table 2). After teachers received information about the ELD mandates at staff meetings, the small-group context gave teachers opportunity to dialogue – to explore issues, share ideas, ask questions, work through problems, and reflect on practice. The conversations were framed with the conceptualization of knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998), in which teachers used inquiry and dialogue to make sense of their daily work in the ELD classroom with ELLs.

Table 2

*Study group sessions overview, by date of session.*

Session	Date	Topic & Questions	Origination	Mediating Tools
1	8/19/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a vision of the four hour block:</li> <li>• What does the four-hour ELD block look like?</li> <li>• How can we meet the state requirements but continue to teach in meaningful, fun, and effective ways?</li> </ul>	I selected this topic after preliminary analysis of initial interview data.	<i>Why am I dumb?</i> (Medina, 1999) <i>Phonics and second language acquisition</i> (Garan, 2007) <i>Questions</i> (Alarcón, 2005)
2	9/4/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximizing language proficiency and achievement:</li> <li>• Where do our students come in at?</li> <li>• Where do we want students to be?</li> <li>• How can we get students to where we want them to be?</li> </ul>	Teachers selected this topic at the end of the first study group.	<i>The same</i> (Alarcón, 2005) <i>Knowledge to support the teaching of reading</i> (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005) ADE documents on AZELLA/ELP standards
3	9/18/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing and investing parents and families:</li> <li>• How can we inform and invest parents?</li> </ul>	The principal suggested the topic due to upcoming conferences.	<i>Family Garden</i> (Alarcón, 2005) ADE documents for parent/home communication
4	10/21/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What works” with parents and students in the context of the ELD classroom</li> </ul>	I left this session open due to ADE audit.	
5	11/6/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describing ELLs:</li> <li>• How can we define and describe each of our ELLs to value their strengths and support their language growth and development?</li> </ul>	I selected this topic to scrutinize the assessment-based cultural model of learning.	<i>I am a level 3 reader</i> (Pierce, 1999)
6	11/20/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELLs and writing</li> </ul>	The teachers selected this topic at the end of the fifth study group.	When English language learners write (Samway, 2006)
7	12/4/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final reflection &amp; Member-checking of data</li> </ul>	I selected this focus to provide closure to the study group sessions.	Preliminary data analysis

We held the teacher study group meetings on a bi-monthly basis in the fall semester of the 2008-2009 school year. We convened in Maravilla classrooms in the morning before school, and I provided participants with coffee and a light breakfast. The study group meetings lasted approximately 60 minutes. We started each meeting with open sharing, which allowed teachers to dialogue about successes and challenges in the ELD classroom. After 10 minutes of *open share*, we shifted to the specific focus for the study group for 45 minutes – framed with a general topic and research questions to guide inquiry and dialogue. When the school bell rang for students to move to their classrooms, we spent 5 minutes to reflect and select the topic and questions to guide our next study group (see Appendix D for a sample study group agenda).

I collected data from the teacher study group meetings on audio files with a digital voice recorder. I transferred the audio files to my computer and transcribed them into rich text files. I transcribed the majority of the audio-taped data, as well as enlisting the assistance of a professional transcriber. I stored and organized the transcribed sessions with the *N-Vivo* 8.0 program. I also recorded the teacher study groups on a hard-disk video camera and burned DVDs for each study group session. I used the video data as a secondary measure to determine who was speaking during unclear times, interpret body language and non-verbal cues, and provide a thick description of the context of the teacher study group.

*Documentation.* I utilized multiple forms of documentation, which provided worthwhile data to understand the institutional mandates and policies that directly affected the ELD classroom teachers. I cataloged numerous documents from the ADE website that clarified the policies, mandates, curriculum, and other pertinent factors of ELD instruction.

The documentation data shaped the teacher study group topics and artifacts to support teacher learning under current institutional realities. I also read local newspapers and archived articles pertinent to the study topic, typically in the realm of education or immigration. I maintained and added to my database of documentation throughout the course of the study.

*Observation.* I conducted various observations to understand the institutional plane of the teacher learning community. To get an idea of the discourse at the state level, I attended and observed the three-day ELD training given by the ADE prior to the commencement of the study in June 2008. At the school level, I attended and observed the ELD trainings given by the instructional coaches to the Maravilla teachers throughout the study from July to December 2008. The staff inservices gave me pertinent information to plan and facilitate the teacher study group discussions while also providing a window into the school-wide, institutional discourse on ELLs. During the observations, I took field notes and collected artifacts such as PowerPoint lectures, paper handouts, and other training materials.

The collection of multiple sources of data increased the construct validity of the case study (Yin, 2003) and resulted in a rich evidentiary database to conduct data analysis to answer the research questions.

### *Data Analysis*

I conducted data analysis throughout the research study. For all analyses, I utilized *N-Vivo* to organize the data and my coding. Below, I describe the data analysis from the initial interviews, the preliminary data analysis that guided the next directions for study group conversations, and the discourse analysis completed after the data collection. As described



below, I utilized the iterative (Erickson, 1986) model of data analysis, which does not follow a linear path from start to finish, but continues to cycle throughout the research; this method of analytic induction (Erickson, 1986) provides triangulation, as assertions are constantly questioned and scrutinized throughout analysis.

*Initial data analysis: Interview data.* I utilized the initial interviews to bring in the needs and voices of the teachers and understand the pertinent issues that affected them in the classroom (Birchak *et al.*, 1998). Through the use of thematic analysis (Erickson, 1986), I analyzed the initial interviews to ground the purpose and goals of the teacher study group and determine a list of possible topics for the first meeting.

From the thematic analysis, I found various purposes and goals for participation in the teacher study group. The teachers joined the teacher study group for logistical support, such as how to lesson plan and design the ELD block schedules. The instructional coach encouraged me to deal primarily with teacher morale and how to survive the year. The principal's concern was that teachers followed the state mandates and gave instruction in line with the ELD mandates. I combined these themes to frame the teacher study group as a place in which effective and meaningful instruction for ELLs would be the topic of discussions with the understanding that teachers needed both personal and professional support. I also used these data to form a list of possible topics and questions to engage our teacher study group conversations (see Appendix E).

*Preliminary discourse analysis: Small-group data.* After each teacher study group meeting, I immersed myself in the audio- and video-taped data from that session. Besides transcribing, reading, and re-reading the written data, I downloaded the audio file to my iPod to listen to

repeatedly to immerse myself in the teachers' discourse. I then analyzed the data to determine the trends that spoke to both the research questions and the teachers' needs using the framework described below. Cognizant of both, I used the findings to plan the next study group meeting accordingly – to both highlight discourse on ELLs and meet the needs of the teachers.

For the preliminary analysis of the study group data, I utilized discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) to pull out pertinent aspects of teachers' discourse to guide the subsequent study group discussions. After hearing and reading the data numerous times, I used *N-Vivo 8.0* to code key words and phrases that stood out to me in the teachers' discourse, looking specifically for patterns that contextualized the use of the words or phrases. Based on these patterns, or situated meanings, I ascertained which cultural models were implicated in the discourse and coded the data accordingly. I then looked to connect those cultural models to the macro-level lens of institutional policies and forces to understand the complexities of the figured world (Holland *et al.*, 1998) of ELD teaching. I used the findings from the data analysis to assist in my plans for the next teacher study group meeting. The preliminary data analysis allowed me to hone in on particular cultural models that were framing teacher discourse and bring those cultural models into subsequent discussions.

To give an example of the analysis described above, consider the following excerpt from a teacher study group session. The teachers are engaged in a conversation about the abilities of their various ELL students. Instead of stating students' names, they characterize them by the test scores received on the state mandated language proficiency assessment, which is a numeric score in the range of one to five.

*Erica:* But I think that I've probably seen this difference [linguistic] because I [my classroom] am the mix, I have threes and fours, so I can see those [students] who – and I have some threes that I swear could be fours, I don't think they're three.

*Amy:* What do you see as the distinction between [a three and four]?

*Erica:* I won't say they learn things faster, but they do seem to pick up a little faster, and then their output [spoken English] is so different.

*Joni:* Between a four and a three? Yeah.

*Erica:* Oh, yes. Like the output is different. Like they're the kind of kids that will take the language objectives and remember to use it, they are the ones that are a little bit more self-initiated. They will try to read, if you say point to the words and follow me, they will, these are seen as differences between a three and a four.

*Joni:* My home base is fours, and most of my kids rock... The kids that were coming from Nicole are either twos or threes; they're probably threes if they're coming to me because Nicole's teaching sounds and letters, so they're probably threes, but in power hour, I really notice that mix, that difference. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

When conducting my preliminary analysis after the meeting, the use of numbers stood out to me in this exchange. I discerned the pattern of teachers utilizing these numeric labels to describe students' abilities. The situated meaning, what was assembled *on the spot* by the teachers based on the context and their past experiences (Gee, 2005), is based on a cultural

model of labels, an oversimplified way to describe students and their abilities. Although the use of labels is typical in education, the use of numbers is relevant specifically for ELD teachers, as ELL classroom placement is based solely on language assessment (i.e., AZELLA) scores. The macro-level language policy that relies solely on a test score to describe students' language proficiency is reflected in the micro-level interaction of the teachers engaged in conversation about their students' abilities. Based on my finding that teachers de-personalized students with a numeric label, I planned the subsequent teacher study group to (a) uncover the cultural model of labeling ELLs by test score and (b) support dialogue on effective and meaningful ways to discuss ELLs as individual students. I integrated a scholarly article, "I am a Level 3 Reader" (Pierce, 1999), as a mediating artifact to incite discussion on the limitations of labels to define and describe students. I discuss more on the teachers' use of numeric labels in the research findings.

*Discourse analysis.* After the data collection was complete, I returned to the data to conduct a deeper level of discourse analysis (Gee, 2005) to answer the research questions. I walked through similar steps to those described above – I immersed myself in both the transcribed and audio-recorded data, pulled out the patterns of key words and phrases to understand the situated meanings, and tied those meanings to cultural models. Utilizing the *N-Vivo* software, I reorganized the coded data to speak to the research questions. With this master list of codes (see Appendix F), I reviewed the total transcripts multiple times to ensure valid and reliable findings to answer each research question. I then looked specifically for the linguistic details to answer each research question by demonstrating how cultural

models (Question 1), situated identities (Question 2), and learning (Question 3) were reflected in the teachers' discourse.

To answer the first research question, I analyzed the teachers' discourse to understand how institutional structures supported the cultural models. Cultural models as a tool of inquiry allow the analyst to see the connection between the micro-level of interaction and the macro-level of institutions (Gee, 2005). Understanding that the participants were intelligent individuals, I sought to connect their micro-level discourse in the teacher study group with the macro-level discourse found in the documentation and observation data that reflected the institutional constructs and mandates. Through this analysis, the cultural models came together to describe the complexity of the figured world (Holland *et al.*, 1998) of ELD teaching at Maravilla School. As discussed in the previous chapter, a *figured world* is a sequence of assumptions, or cultural models, that create a standard storyline that is used to figure the meanings of characters, acts, and events in daily life (Holland *et al.*, 1998).

I honed in on the situated identities of three teacher study group participants to answer the second research question. Although the institutionally supported cultural models were evident in the data, they were not scripted in to teachers' discourse on ELLs. Situated identities (Gee, 2000, 2005; Holland *et al.*, 1998) led teachers to participate in various ways within the figured world and allowed them to either accept or resist the dominant cultural models. Teachers used the figured world not only to act in accordance with the direction of others, but also "to understand and organize aspects of one's self and at least some of one's own feelings and thoughts" (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 121). By coding the individual discourse of each teacher throughout the interviews and teacher study groups, I was able to trace each

teacher's participation and enactment of various socially situated identities, along with how teachers recognized one another as a "certain kind of person" (Gee, 2000, p. 100), through changing social languages and other linguistic cues and clues.

To answer the third research question, I examined the data throughout the study group to find changes in teachers' cultural models and discourses over time (Rogoff, 2003). In the figured world of ELD teaching, learning is understood as the re-conceptualization of the figured world, which begins with changing discourses and transforming enactments of cultural models. To help me locate instances of change in the study group, I incorporated a three-facet conceptual scheme to examine teacher communities of practice (Little, 2002). Through analysis of *representations of practice*, I examined how teachers portrayed classroom practice in social interaction with other teachers. With the lens of *orientation to practice*, I analyzed data for instances that either opened up or closed down opportunities for learning. I also scrutinized the *norms of interaction* within the teacher study group, which looked at patterns in discourse and how material artifacts mediated conversation. The analysis gave evidence of change in teachers' discourses and cultural models.

I included various measures to ensure validity throughout the data analysis. First, triangulation was the cornerstone of the research, made possible through the multiple sources of evidence from data collection. Second, I utilized member checks of the findings with the participants in the teacher study group. In the final teacher study group and the individual exit interviews, I shared the various findings with them to receive feedback on the validity and possible reasons behind the cultural models that were portrayed. Third, I shared my findings with other scholars to ensure that my findings were not biased or skewed due to

my participation in the teacher study group. Finally, I offered a draft of the case study findings for a final review to teacher study group participants.

With research questions that dive into the intricate complexities of the lived realities of ELD teachers at one Arizona school, the case study design and methods allowed for “deep, self-referential probes of problems” (Stake, 1998, p. 401). By nature of the case study design, the goal of research is not to generalize in the conventional sense, but rather to capture the intricacy of one context (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). The findings from the ELD teacher study group can *ring true* in other settings (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001) to tell us about situations beyond the actual case. Schools across Arizona face analogous issues in the present circumstances of ELD implementation. Although this study focuses solely on Maravilla School, the findings can tell us more about the realities of other schools in the state facing similar challenges in the current social and political environment when asked to follow specific educational policies and programs for ELLs.

### *Context*

*The school.* Maravilla School sits in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in a large, metropolitan city in Arizona. Located on a busy, six-lane street near the intersection of two major freeways, the school is in the hub of the urban ambience. Along the main road, small shops and other businesses line the street. The majority of the business names are in Spanish – *La Casa de Fiestas*, *Peluquería*, *Carnicería* – which give the feeling of an ethnic-enclave-type community in the heart of the metropolitan city. There are a number of run-down, boarded-up buildings that are covered in graffiti; some vacant buildings are surrounded by plastic-covered, chain-linked fences, assumedly to hide the tagged-up building but also now covered

in graffiti. Off of the main road, a grid of smaller streets makes up the core of the school's community. Made up of block, ranch-style homes, the neighborhood reflects the tough economic times with foreclosed and vacated homes with boarded-up windows and overgrown yards. A neighborhood apartment building welcomes tenants with a hand-written *for rent* sign posted on the crumbling adobe walls.

Maravilla School is a welcoming place for teachers, students, and parents of this metropolitan neighborhood. The Kindergarten-through-eighth grade school is the home to 55 teachers and nearly 1,000 students – 97% of whom are Latino, 97% of whom are on free- and reduced-lunch, and 50% of whom are considered ELLs. The school is considered *Performing*, a state-designated label based on standardized test scores; however, the school is in corrective action for not meeting yearly growth requirements on standardized test scores, which implicates tighter and ongoing monitoring from the state department.

The stone façade of the school is newly painted and has an impressive look from the main road. With the U.S. and Arizona flags flying high on the front flag pole, a canvas sign hangs from the brown wrought-iron fence that proclaims “We are a Performing School.” The digital signage outside the school is updated frequently – reminders of school event dates, invitations for new families to the neighborhood, and accolades to the teacher of the month. The sign also lauds the many accomplishments of the school, which include “Performing Plus” based on state test scores, a “Beat the Odds School” from the Center for the Future of Arizona, and winner of the Arizona School Boards Association Golden Bell Award.



Similar to the neat look of the exterior, the stone gives a clean and new look to the school's interior. The hallways are thoughtfully decorated with beautiful paintings from scenes in children's books and inspirational quotes about learning. Bulletin boards line the interior hallways and display students' work – many of them referencing the Arizona state standard that the work demonstrates. Tan planters with green plants hang from the ceiling and walls. The building is made up of various wings that enclose courtyard areas with picnic tables, umbrellas, trees, and plants visible from the hallways through the large windows. After the morning bell to begin school, the school principal plays Latino instrumental music over the loudspeaker as students in red shirts and navy pants scurry into classrooms.

*The administration.* Mr. Erick Johnson is the school's leader and ensures that all staff is grounded and driven by the school's mission statement: "Maravilla's community provides all learners with the skills and experiences to succeed academically and contribute positively to a diverse society." After teaching experiences in Washington, D.C., Mexico, South America, and Arizona, he became the principal here. He left South America and came to Maravilla to teach dual language (i.e., Spanish and English) – only to have it outlawed and disestablished one year after his arrival, due to Proposition 203. He is bilingual in English and Spanish and is an advocate for Maravilla students.

Erick is held in high regard by the teachers, as he is referred to by first name and in a positive frame of reference. The feeling is mutual, as Mr. Johnson prides himself in his young, talented, and vibrant staff, whom he personally hand-picked and describes as "the best." He tries to instill a sense of community, starting each staff meeting with personal successes and life stories, such as Erick's wife's pregnancy or another teacher's engagement.

Simultaneously operating with the best interest of children, he believes that teachers also must feel valued to be effective. As a former Teach for America (TFA) corps member himself, many Maravilla teachers are either current or former members of TFA – an alternative path-to-certification program that places teachers at schools in high-need areas for a two-year commitment.

Mr. Johnson was excited at the idea of conducting this research with his ELD teachers. He understood that the teachers in the new SEI classrooms needed support in order to best serve ELLs. Erick frequently referred to the ELD mandate as a “language adventure” – attempting to have a positive attitude toward the new approach to teaching ELLs. He admitted that although he did not originally agree with mandate, he agreed that prior ELL instruction did not work. He aimed for all ELLs to test proficiently on the AZELLA and be moved out of the four-hour program model, even if this meant teaching in alignment to the AZELLA assessment.

Erick’s administrative duties changed with the new ELD mandates, as did the responsibilities of the two instructional coaches – Katie and Cristy. Due to the pressure from the state department, their time became consumed with paperwork, schedules, and lesson plans to ensure that Maravilla was in compliance with new ELD mandates. Unfortunately, the new responsibilities removed Erick and the instructional coaches from the classroom, greatly reducing the time supporting teachers and students. Nevertheless, Mr. Johnson maintained his focus on the students and encouraged teachers to do the same. In one faculty meeting that focused on explaining the new ELD mandates and ADE expectations, he began by asking the teachers to visualize a picture of one of their “kiddos that is capable of

lots but is held back due to their lack of a grasp of English.” Although the ADE required the ELD training, Erick wanted to ensure that the dialogue focused on students, rather than state mandates.

*The English Language Development implementation.* With a history of strong dual language programs, the ADE targeted Maravilla’s district in the 2007-2008 school year to pilot the ELD approach, resulting in required partial implementation of the new mandates one year early. First, the school was required to separate all ELLs into ELD classrooms separate from mainstream students. Second, the ADE criticized the district for overuse of waivers for ELLs to enter the few dual language programs that survived Proposition 203; they stated that waivers could only be requested by parents with no school advisement, which nearly eliminated waiver use, as parents were uninformed and unaware of the option. Third, the ADE visited classrooms of Latino teachers – scripting their speech, arbitrarily rating their English proficiency, and citing the district for their “poor English use.” In order for Maravilla’s district to remain in compliance, the district asked these teachers to take English language classes over the weekends to learn to speak Standard English without a detectable accent. Teachers’ low morale toward ELD instruction started after this visit, as teachers were frustrated with the pressures of state audits and the trends of school test scores that portrayed the ELD classrooms as the lowest performing in the school.

Due to teachers’ frustrations and challenges from the previous year, the 2008-2009 school year brought tension to Maravilla around ELD classroom placements. Before the school year, Erick explained that most teachers coveted the mainstream classrooms and did not want to teach in ELD classrooms, due to the struggle to make academic gains and issues

with students' behavior. In some cases, placements within each grade level were based primarily on who was able to teach in the ELD classroom – teachers had to be considered highly qualified and possess either their ESL or SEI endorsement. In other cases, placements within a grade level were decided based on who was willing to teach in the ELD classroom – teachers both requested and rejected ELD placement. Gisela, a study participant, told the story of a colleague who outright refused to teach in an ELD classroom, stating that she “didn’t come here [to Maravilla] to teach kids how to learn English” (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008). As the fall semester went on, other teachers in the study group expressed concerns about the divide between mainstream and ELD teachers, as they lived and worked in different realities within the same school. Despite the separation divide that many of the ELD teachers felt from mainstream classroom teachers, the school administration required all teachers to attend the SEI inservices at the school.

Held monthly and totaling 20 hours, the SEI trainings were mandated by ADE. Katie and Cristy, the two instructional coaches, were charged with training the staff according to the new requirements for ELD instruction as designated by both the district and state department. The content of the required trainings trickled down from the ADE, to the district language and curriculum coordinators, to the school instructional coaches, and finally, to the teachers. Frequently in the teacher trainings, Cristy or Katie proclaimed, “We just got this information on Monday and now we’re turning around and giving it to you” (Memo, August 13, 2008) just two days later. This continual disclaimer demonstrated the top-down, emergent, unknown nature of the ELD content, as well as served as a buffer for the instructional coaches when the ELD teachers got frustrated with the expectation for

immediate implementation. Factors that motivated teachers to participate in the ELD teacher study group included the top-down nature of the mandates and the behaviorist form of teacher training that did not allow teachers to make the content their own.

### *Participants*

In this section, I introduce the participants of the teacher study group. I describe background information that affects their participation in the figured world of ELD teaching, including entry into teaching, intellectual biography, cultural and linguistic differences, and expert lenses brought to the collective group (Grossman, 1990). As the teacher study group is a learning community that implies distributed cognition among individuals, each teacher brings various forms of expertise to the table built from the various components of their personal biography (Grossman *et al.*, 2001). A brief biographic description of the study participants helps to better situate the findings.

*Cristy.* Cristy is the instructional coach who works with teachers on professional development and policy implementation. Her grandparents are originally from Spain, and she can understand some Spanish when spoken to her. Cristy's intellectual biography includes a Bachelor's degree with ESL endorsement, as well as a Master's degree with reading endorsement. Before becoming an instructional coach, Cristy taught in the primary grades in another Arizona district for six years, including one year as the English teacher in a dual-language classroom. She enjoys her role as a coach, which allows her to work with primary teachers on instructional strategies to better meet the needs of their students. As an instructional coach who was held accountable at the school leadership level for the ELD

implementation, Cristy brought a lens that focused on following state mandates and ensuring compliance among ELD teachers.

*Erica.* Erica, a seventh-year teacher bilingual in Spanish and English, studied ESL/Bilingual Education for undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation. Erica has taught in multiple contexts, starting her first year in a dual-language classroom, then moving to a mainstream (English-only instruction for non ELLs) classroom, and now as an second-grade, ELD teacher. As a Guatemalan immigrant, she describes herself as comfortable in the ELD classroom due to her identification with the students. Erica values her students' rich cultural backgrounds and worries they will lose their identities in the new ELD classroom with the rigid skill-based English instruction. Erica brought a unique lens to the study group, as she personally connected with her students and frequently incorporated second language acquisition theory to ground study group topics such as instructional strategies for ELLs. At the same time, Erica often played the role of questioner – posing questions to others about the ELD classroom context.

*Joni.* Joni, a seventh-year teacher, received her undergraduate degree in English and began her professional journey as a social worker in group homes. She returned to school for her post-baccalaureate and teaching certification and started a line of rich experiences in the primary grades – teaching first, second, and third grades, as well as one year in a dual-language classroom. During the time of the study, Joni was teaching first grade and pursuing her Master's degree in education. As the daughter of a French immigrant and a long-time Arizona resident, Joni speaks conversational French and Spanish and is fluent in English. Joni's seven years at Maravilla and her academic experience in graduate school characterized

the lens she brought to our study group – providing context for past district policies and an involved understanding of the political and social context of Arizona.

*Andrea.* Andrea, a fifth-year teacher, came into the field of education through TFA after receiving her undergraduate degree from an east-coast university. After teaching four years of Kindergarten, she switched to fifth grade to seek out a new challenge and expand her teaching background. Andrea has her Master's degree in education and plans to seek her administration certificate to be a school principal. After coming to Arizona, she met and married a Latino man and had a child who is being raised to be bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English. Andrea brought two very distinct lenses to the study group – one as an expert teacher with multiple ideas to share, and one as the vocal participant regarding frustrations with the ELD classroom context. Andrea's main challenge was showing growth and meeting the needs of the many special education students, which came up as a frequent topic in our teacher study groups.

*Gisela.* As a Maravilla employee for seven years, Gisela changed roles at the school many times, starting as the attendance clerk. With the lifelong desire to be a teacher, she became a classroom instructional assistant while enrolled in a teacher preparation program and transitioned to classroom teacher upon completion of the program. After teaching sixth grade for three years, Gisela made the decision at the end of the previous school year to switch to fourth grade. As a fourth-generation Mexican American, Gisela feels that she can connect with many of the experiences of her students outside of language proficiency, as she does not speak Spanish. Gisela brought an interesting lens to our group, as she joined the teacher study group in order to seek support in both the new grade level and ELD context.

Outside of questions to improve her practice in her new situation, Gisela contributed instructional ideas from her own practice and experiences with other teachers with whom she had worked.

*Molly.* Molly, a third-year teacher, also became a teacher through TFA after attending an east-coast university. After teaching for two years at another Arizona school, she came to Maravilla to teach sixth grade due to the school's reputation as a positive place to teach and learn. Molly attributed a number of past life experiences as playing integral roles in her classroom practice, including her own second-language-learning experiences with both Chinese and French and her time living abroad in China. She asserts she believes strongly in providing students with an empowering curriculum, as she describes her own personal goal as letting kids evaluate, synthesize, talk, debate, and think about what is happening in the world. Molly frequently brought the lenses of social justice, student-centered pedagogy, and high expectations to our study group conversation.

*Marcy.* Marcy, a first-year teacher, relocated to Arizona from the Pacific Northwest after receiving her undergraduate and Master's degrees in ESL. Due to the lack of diversity in her Northwestern community, Marcy moved to Arizona for her first year of teaching specifically to work with the Latino population; however, new to the region and often unable to converse in Spanish with parents, she encountered unfamiliarity with a number of the social and political realities that her students faced both inside and outside of school. As a new teacher, Marcy found herself in a tough spot trying to implement the ELD policy while also bringing in the meaningful instruction learned in her teacher preparation program to her second-grade classroom. Marcy brought these lenses to the study group conversations –



asking the questions and seeking the answers as a first-year teacher who cares about her students' education.

*Amy.* I am a graduate student and clinical instructor at the local university, seeking my doctorate in Language and Literacy. My career in education began in 2002 when I moved to Arizona and took on the job of a kindergarten teacher as a part of the TFA program. In my past seven years in education, I have taught kindergarten, first grade, high school math, undergraduate teacher preparation courses, and graduate teacher preparation courses. I currently teach graduate coursework to inservice teachers, which focuses on pedagogy and instructional strategies for working with ELLs. I am bilingual in English and Spanish, after living abroad in Argentina and studying Spanish for my undergraduate degree. My past and present experiences contributed two lenses to the study group – that of a teacher who is passionate and knowledgeable about teaching ELLs and that of a researcher planning and conducting my dissertation study.

I was the facilitator of our teacher study group, and my responsibilities followed the suggestions of Birchak and colleagues (1998). My role entailed additional tasks before, during, and after the meetings. Before each meeting, I made a tentative and negotiable agenda to guide our study group discussion. At the beginning of each meeting, I brought coffee and breakfast, ensured that the meeting started on time, recounted key points from the last meeting, and grounded the meeting in the topic and research questions. During the meeting, I facilitated the dialogue by actively listening, connecting ideas to other topics and bigger issues, and encouraging all voices to be heard. At the end of the meeting, I summarized the highlights of the discussion and lead the reflection and negotiation of the

next meeting's focus. After the meeting, I distributed the meeting notes and the next meeting plans via e-mail.

My position as the researcher undoubtedly affected my role as the facilitator, as I was present at the teacher study group to support dialogue and collect substantial and meaningful data to answer my research questions. Although I planned and facilitated the study group meetings based around the teachers' desired topics, I also purposefully brought in mediating artifacts and specific questions that would spark conversations pertinent to the study. As both the teachers' needs and the desired discourse dealt specifically with ELLs, I found that balancing the two agendas – meeting the teachers' needs and collecting data specific to the research questions – was not difficult.

My personal and professional background also inherently affected both of my roles as the facilitator and researcher. As a former teacher, I brought a similar lens and set of experiences to the table that I was able to use to connect with the teachers, build rapport and collegiality, and share pedagogical ideas from the classroom. As a university instructor for SEI coursework, I brought the expertise and knowledge about second language acquisition, ELL instructional strategies, and the language policy back drop in Arizona. As a doctoral scholar and advocate for ELLs, I approached the study group conversations and research with a sense of skepticism toward the ELD four hour block instruction for ELLs – hoping to engage teachers in critical conversations that focused more on students and less on policy. Knowing that the interplay of my multiple *bats* wove into the data collection and analysis throughout the study, I was diligent to reflect on my roles through memos and journals, as well as integrate my own discourse into the research findings.

*Conclusion*

This case study utilized qualitative data from each of the co-existing planes of sociocultural learning through individual interviews, small-group teacher learning community interaction, and institutional documentation and observation. The data were analyzed inductively throughout the study, which led to the enrichment of the teacher study group conversations and efficacy of the discourse analysis. This resulted in meaningful and valid findings about teacher learning about ELLs at Maravilla School. The findings are presented in the next three chapters, organized by the research questions, respectively:

- What are the cultural models reflected in teachers' discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' different situated identities (e.g., teachers, citizens) mediate their discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' discourses and cultural models on language, learning, and ELLs change when introduced to new tools and ideas in a small group?

## CHAPTER 4

### Dominant Cultural Models in Discourse: The Figured World of English Language

#### Development Teaching

In this chapter, I answer the first research question: *What are the cultural models reflected in teachers' discourses on ELLs?* I use the concept of a figured world (Holland *et al.*, 1998) to tie together and give coherence to teachers' cultural models. With the understanding that cultural models are taken-for-granted assumptions, figured worlds structure the assumptions into a "standard plot" or "taken for granted sequence of relations" (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 55). Although grounded in dominant institutional and societal discourse, the culturally modeled world is not prescriptive but significant as a backdrop for interpretation, as the meaning of characters, acts, and events in everyday life is figured against this storyline. As previously described in Chapter 2, a figured world is

A socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state as moved by a specific set of forces. (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 52)

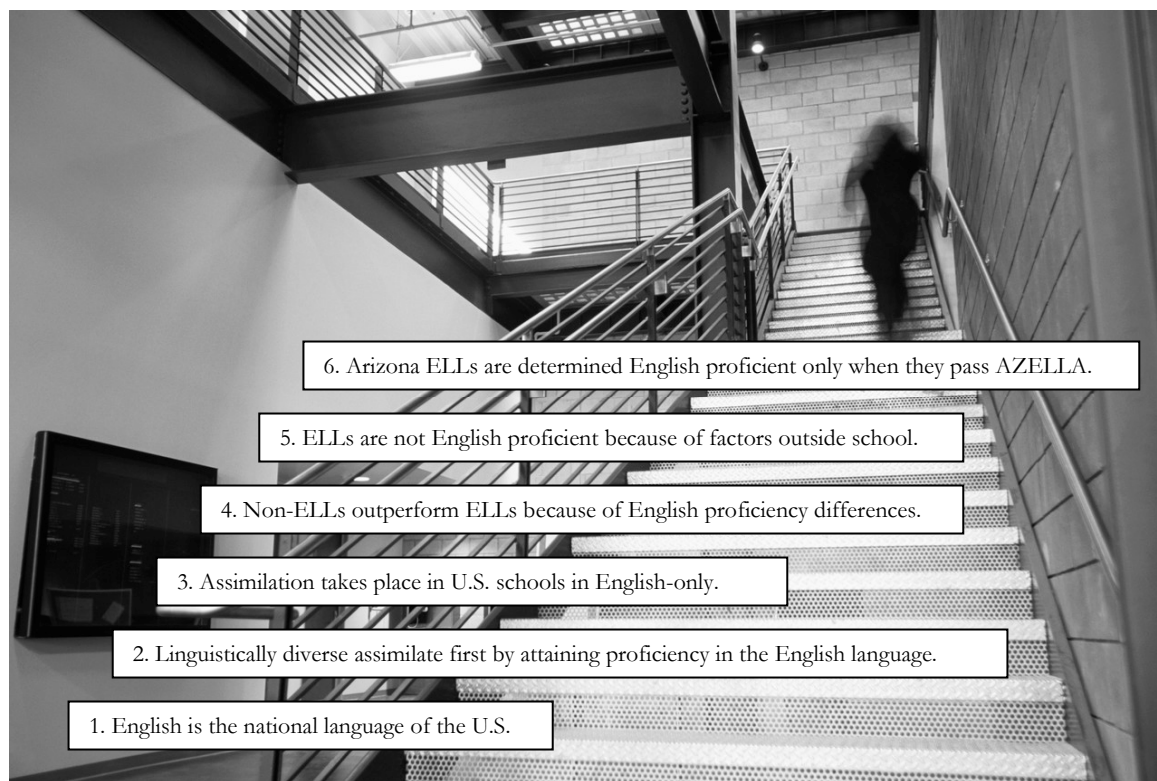
To ground the study in sociocultural theory and aptly answer the research questions, I explore the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School – grounded in dominant institutional and societal discourse on ELLs and used by teachers to make meaning throughout the complexities of the school day.

The figured world of ELD teaching involved the discourses and cultural constructions that constitute the familiar aspects of teaching life: the participants (e.g.,

principals, coaches, teachers) and their common acts (e.g., mandates, inservices, assessments, instruction) as situated in a particular institution (e.g., education, schools). The discourse included terms grounded in the educational institution (e.g., labels, policies, assessments) and allowed teachers to evaluate their efforts, understand themselves, and interpret their positions in the school. When the study group teachers engaged in dialogue, they assumed the words were understood in relation to the cultural models that made up the simplified world of ELD teaching. In this study, the data from the study group discourse revealed a typical sequence of events in the figured world of ELD teaching – demonstrated through the interconnected dominant cultural models of language, ELLs, and learning. The teachers figured the world following this standard plot:

- English is the national language of the U.S.
- Society assumes that linguistically diverse families in the U.S. need to assimilate to become *American*, which starts by attaining proficiency in the English language.
- Assimilation takes place in U.S. schools, where school success occurs in English-only.
- ELLs perform poorer than non-ELLs academically because they are not English proficient.
- ELLs are not English proficient due to factors outside of school – parents speak only Spanish and are burdened by poverty and legal status.
- ELLs demonstrate English language proficiency (ELP) only when they pass the AZELLA language assessment.

Although some resisted and held competing cultural models of language, ELLs, and learning, the data demonstrated that teachers used a sequence of dominant cultural models (see Figure 1) to make meaning of daily practice.



*Figure 1.* Sequence of cultural models in the figured world of English Language Development teaching.

The three sections of this chapter build on one another to describe the figured world of ELD teaching: (a) Cultural Models of Language, (b) Cultural Models of English Language Learners, and (c) Cultural Models of Learning. First, each section commences with an analysis of the dominant cultural models reflected in teachers' discourse in the study group sessions and individual interviews. Although I consider the resistance, interruption, and

negotiation of cultural models in this chapter, these complexities are further explored in Chapters 5 and 6. Second, I connect teachers' micro-level discourse to the macro-level institutional and societal discourse to demonstrate the origin and efficacy of dominant cultural models in the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School. Third, I close each section with discussion to ground the teachers' dominant cultural models in the literature.

*Cultural Models of Language: "It's really important that you don't speak in Spanish"*

On a Thursday morning in September, the teacher study group convened in Andrea's classroom. Due to upcoming parent and teacher conferences, the conversation focused on connecting with the families of ELLs. When I invited teachers to take on the role of ELL parents to better understand their questions and concerns, they resisted the role play and instead discussed what parents should do at home to support ELLs.

*Gisela:* I told them to practice at home English with their brothers and sisters.

I always never wanted to overstep the boundary to like, "Oh, you should talk to your parents in English." Whatever, I never did that because I always believe it's better for them to be bilingual instead of losing their Spanish, but I mean a good thing is always [to speak English] as much as they can at home. Whenever the parents are like, "What can we do?" Especially when it's a low, low monolingual [student], "You need to, at least if you could, practice at home speaking English to your brothers and sisters. You can help them, even like the little babies at home or whatever." That [speaking English at home] is always a good suggestion.

*Amy:* What other things besides talking to their brothers and sisters could we encourage them [parents] to do?

*Andrea:* I'm not a fan of television but I have many times told parents, "If your kids are going to watch, have them watch it in English."

*Joni:* And if they have closed captioning.

*Amy:* What about reading and writing? What could you encourage them [parents] to do at home?

*Joni:* Read out loud.

*Amy:* And when we talk about reading and writing, what if the parents say ...

"Well, I can only read in Spanish." What do you say to that?

*Joni:* I say great because first language development is crucial to second language. (Study Group 3, September 18, 2008)

In the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, teachers dialogued about English and Spanish, making language foundational to the figured world of ELD teaching. This section describes the dominant cultural models of language reflected in teachers' discourse: (a) English for nationalism and assimilation, (b) English for school success, and (c) The place of Spanish.

*English for nationalism and assimilation: "You live in a country that speaks English."*

Dominant cultural models of language emphasize the need for all residents of the U.S. to speak English. Although the ELD teachers at Maravilla did not subscribe completely to the staunchly monolingual cultural model present in societal discourse, they did recognize the value of English. Erica and Molly described their thoughts on the importance of learning the English language as a resident of the U.S.



*Erica:* It's [learning English] good because these Hispanic kids can learn English, and I think that on the other side for the Hispanic parents, they [the parents] see it is as good. I think there is a sense of, like, they have to know English. And English is good. And that if you can teach them English, that's good. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Molly:* Sure it sounds great, let's make sure all these kids learn English. The parents want the kids to learn English. Everybody wants the kids to learn English. If they come to our country, they should learn English. That's the general perception. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Erica's discourse implies the responsibility of ELLs to learn the dominant language of mainstream society – something that they “have to” or “should” do. Through the use of evaluative statements, her discourse reflects the cultural model of English as the language of value that is “good” to maintain and become a part of mainstream society. Molly used similar discourse, but she framed the statement aware of the societal expectations for speaking English. Teachers' varying degrees of consciousness of cultural models led to distinct perceptions and beliefs about ELLs. Molly's cognizance of the dominant cultural models is explored further in Chapter 5.

Rather than value bilingualism, the societal insistence on monolingualism stigmatizes and marginalizes ELLs and their native languages. Erica asserted,

They [the students] have to learn it and they understand the reasons why. You live in a country that speaks English and if you don't [speak English]

people won't see it the good way, so it's kind of like a punishment or a different way of seeing you. So, I want them to learn because, number one, so they can succeed when they grow up and, number two, so they can defend themselves and not be overtaken or looked at different, because I see that still. You go to some place and they look at you different or they look at somebody else different. (Initial Interview, August 11, 2008)

Erica, a Guatemalan immigrant who learned English as her second language, made a personal connection with an *I-statement* (i.e., "I see that still."), alluding to her own experiences with linguistic difference and discrimination. Deeply affected by her own experience with the dominant cultural model of language that frowns on linguistic difference, Erica poignantly maintained the individual's responsibility to learn and speak English. Not only is learning English good, according to Erica, it is pertinent to not be punished or considered different. The monolingual and assimilative societal discourse only allows a student to *fit in* with the *mainstream* by speaking English.

*English for school success: "They don't have the language."* The teachers' discourse also reflected the dominant cultural model that emphasized English as the only language for school instruction, thus marginalizing other languages. Teachers' discourse frequently implied that English was the language being discussed.

*Erica:* They don't have the language. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Cristy:* That [inferring the main idea] is very difficult for kids who don't have the language. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

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*Mary:* They don't have the vocabulary. (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

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*Cristy:* They don't have the productive language yet. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

Two linguistic patterns were evident in the discourse: (a) the use of negatives to stress students' deficiencies (e.g., "don't") and (b) the implicit use of the declarative article "the" when referring to "language" to assume that English is the only language of value in school and students cannot speak what is perceived as proper or standard English. Even when teachers did not cast a negative lens on ELLs learning abilities, teachers further insinuated that English was the only language of importance.

*Joni:* And she has a lot of language; she just last year would not produce [it], but she had it. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

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*Gisela:* Like, one of them just barely started speaking at all. (Study Group 3, September 18, 2008)

Although many ELLs spoke Spanish, the discourse implied the insignificance of children's bilingualism. In school, where language policies govern instruction and assessment in English-only, teachers came to espouse the cultural models that English was the only essential language in school. *Diglossia* is the result, in which English is the esteemed language of value, and other languages, specifically Spanish, are ascribed low prestige and status.

*The place of Spanish: “We can speak it, but not in the classroom.”* Teachers recognized that students had the ability to speak another language and explicitly stated the value of bilingualism. Nevertheless, their discourse reflected the diglossic cultural model that proposed the appropriate place for Spanish was outside of the classroom. Teachers exposed cultural models of Spanish in reference to both bilingual and ELD classroom contexts.

Although Maravilla School once housed dual-language programs, most teachers exhibited a negative stance toward bilingual education. Andrea, fluent in Spanish and English, discussed her personal division toward bilingual education, as she felt that two languages would be “overwhelming” and “just too much input” for many of her students.

For students, I think sometimes one language is better, but as far as skills for the world, being bilingual one hundred percent [is the] best option. I mean, especially with the makeup of our country now, especially [having speaking familiarity] with Spanish. I feel like they should, for their own benefit, know both languages. But they don’t. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Andrea’s discourse indicated the inherent value of bilingualism but also insinuated that ELLs were not truly bilingual. Further, she doubted the capacity of some ELLs and stated that learning in two languages would prove too demanding, specifically for her students with learning disabilities.

The discourse that questioned bilingual education was voiced by the majority of study group teachers. Research has demonstrated that bilingual education is more effective than English immersion, as instruction builds on ELLs’ first language abilities and strengths (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Nevertheless, bilingual classrooms are not the panacea for

language education in every context. Even proponents of bilingual education admit that programs can be flawed due to lack of teacher preparation or classroom resources (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Cristy, Joni, and Erica taught in dual-language classrooms before they were abolished at Maravilla School and reflected on their experiences.

*Cristy:* I wish there were more dual language programs. I just think they need to be tightly monitored and teachers need to be very well trained.... They were not speaking English the amount of time that they needed to do it. And they were not expecting kids to have that output at all.... I don't even think that the standards, the high expectations, were in those bilingual programs. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Joni:* My experience teaching dual language was really, really bad, but I don't think it was the dual-language thing. I think it was lots of other things... not really understanding [dual-language education]. I was kind of just thrown into it. But I think done right, I think it would be really powerful. (Exit Interview, December 13, 2008)

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*Erica:* When I started working here, my first year I was put into a dual language setting – where I had the English speakers and the person I worked with had Spanish and then we would switch. But I think in my experience with that [dual language], I think I would be, I don't

want to say successful, but more aware maybe or more prepared if I knew what it looked like. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

The teachers who had dual-language classroom experience revealed two rationales for the mixed discourse on bilingual education: (a) they viewed dual-language as a good concept in theory, but (b) they were troubled by the poor enactment in bilingual classroom practice.

Based on negative experiences and viewpoints of bilingual education in practice, teachers relied upon English-only instruction as the answer to ELL student achievement. Rather than emphasize the cultural model of biliteracy, which would insinuate native language instruction in schools, teachers' discourse reflected diglossia through the marginalized status of Spanish in the English-only context. As English is the language of success at school, Spanish only had a place outside of school. Erica discussed her own struggle with the cultural model that disparaged her native language:

I get caught in both [bilingual versus monolingual language policy in schools] because I do want to acknowledge that yes, Spanish is their culture. It's my culture, it's your culture, and we can speak it, but not in the classroom. You know what I mean? It's just, so, for me, that one's [the question of English-only language policy] a hard one. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Whereas Erica recognized and grappled with the dominant cultural model that excluded Spanish use in the classroom, Marcy's story of an event in her classroom gave a glimpse of the cultural model enacted as language repression in the classroom:

My kids were speaking in Spanish today, and I was like, "It's really important that you don't speak in Spanish because I can get in trouble if you guys are

speaking in Spanish in here.” They’re like, “Can you get fired?” And I said, “Yeah, if it gets that serious, I can.” (Study Group 2, September 4, 2008)

Marcy’s discourse utilized linguistic cues that manifested the strong stigma and consequence behind the use of Spanish at school – “trouble,” “fired,” and “serious.” Here, not only does Spanish not have a place in school, English-only institutional mandates and pressures transform the dominant cultural model of language into linguistic repression (Delpit, 2006).

*Institutional support of cultural models of language.* As linguistic difference is a characteristic of ELLs, language was a frequent topic of conversation. Although the teachers outwardly acknowledged the benefits of bilingualism, dominant cultural models of language were manifested in their discourse. The societal discourse of monolingualism and assimilation and the policy structures in the educational institution supported these dominant cultural models.

The key institutional structures that supported English-centered cultural models of language were the educational policies that dictated the language of instruction that teachers used in the classroom. Since its inception in 2000, Proposition 203 has governed how teachers teach ELLs. Proposition 203 states:

The English language is the national public language of the United State of America .... Immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement; and the government and the public schools of Arizona have a moral obligation and a constitutional duty to provide all of Arizona’s children, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, with the skills necessary to become productive

members of our society. Of these skills, literacy in the English language is among the most important. (Arizona Department of Education, 2000, p. 1)

The teachers' discourse exhibited similar linguistic features to the language policy – English as the uniting and most important language of the nation, parents wanting children to learn English, and English as the ticket to assimilation. The English-centered cultural model demonstrated the connection between the discourse of the teachers and the institution.

Beyond the implementation of English-only language policy in schools based on dominant societal ideologies of assimilation and monolingualism, Proposition 203 elevated the status of English in schools by pushing anti-bilingual-education propaganda.

The public schools of Arizona currently do an inadequate job of educating immigrant children, wasting financial resources on costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children. (Arizona Department of Education, 2000, p. 1)

The attack on bilingual education provided the foundation for the *English for the Children* campaign, funded by California billionaire Ron Unz, which led to the English-only policies in California and Arizona. Although research backs bilingual education, the institutional repudiation of Spanish at school, paired with teachers' experiences in less than adequate dual-language classroom contexts, sustained the dominant cultural models.

Of the 7 teachers in my study, only Cristy taught prior to the passing of Proposition 203; therefore, the other 6 teachers knew no other reality outside of English-only policies. Although Cristy, Joni, and Erica taught in dual-language classrooms, negative experiences



reinforced the need for English-only language policies. Teachers unknowingly succumbed to the dominant cultural models of language that served the broader societal aim to culturally and linguistically assimilate immigrants and maintain U.S. nationalism.

*Language in the figured world of English language development teaching.* The cultural models of language formed the foundation of the figured world of ELD teaching. Grounded in societal discourse that devalues bilingualism and institutionalized through English-only language policies, monolingual and diglossic cultural models allowed teachers to interpret and simplify the complexities of linguistic difference and expectations in the ELD classroom.

The use of monolingualism to achieve nationalism and assimilation is historically grounded. Nationalism is “conceived in language, not in blood” (Anderson, 1983, p. 145), which demonstrates the power of language to consolidate and unify an imagined community. Diverse nations, such as the U.S., develop linguistic standards to marginalize non-dominant languages (e.g., Spanish, Arabic) other than the official language-of-state (e.g., English). When the government decides on the languages that can and cannot be spoken, language and politics are bound together through the creation of a “legitimate language” that imposes itself on the entire population of a territory (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 45). The language-of-state then becomes the standard against which all linguistic use is measured and determines which individuals hold linguistic capital.

The dominant cultural model of English monolingualism did not arrive with the English-only language policies of the past decade. Dating back to colonialism of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, monolingualism was utilized to marginalize the languages of the colonized. Pennycook (1998) described the role of language in England’s colonization of North

America, “English is both the language that will apparently bestow civilization, knowledge and wealth on people and at the same time is the language in which they are racially defined” (p. 4). As the English colonizers perceived the American Indians as “lacking history, culture, religion and intelligence” (Pennycook, 1998, p. 56), English – the language of U.S. civilization – was forced upon them as the legitimate language-of-state. Using hegemonic linguistic attitudes as to what was considered good or standard, negative connotations were magnified as the colonized spoke non-standard varieties of language further away from the standard (Talib, 2002).

Early nationalist periods in the U.S. continued the cultural model of English monolingualism to “prescribe the acquisition of English as an essential component of patriotism and Americanization and what it means to be ‘American’” (Wiley, 2004, p. 322). Crawford (1992) compiled a number of historical writings to show the history of English-only ideologies in the U.S. Written in 1917, Theodore Roosevelt declared:

We must have but one flag. We must have but one language .... The greatness of this nation depends on the swift assimilation of the aliens she welcomes to her shores. Any force which attempts to retard that assimilative process is a force hostile to the highest interest of our country. (Crawford, 1992, p. 85)

The anomaly of English for U.S. nationalism remains poignant today through the classic characterization of society as the *American melting pot*, or the amalgamation of immigrants into the undifferentiated American mainstream accomplished through repression of languages other than English.

The cultural model of English monolingualism for assimilation is historically grounded but has taken new form with the wave of Spanish-speaking migrants from Mexico, Central America, and South America. For immigrant children especially from these regions, schooling “serves as the primary point of sustained and close contact with a crucial institution of the society their parents chose to join” (Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 345). As all children are required to attend school, educational language policies are powerful mechanisms for promoting the socialization of learners (Shohamy, 2006). English-only policies for classroom instruction dictate English as the legitimate language that is the only standard by which to measure school success. Other languages are silenced or repressed in the classroom (Delpit, 2006), as institutional authorities utilize consequences for breaches in policy, and teachers assume that use of languages other than English at home or school deters from the speed with which a student acquires ELP.

When English-only policies promote only one language, other languages are displaced. In a country that values monolingualism over bilingualism, society perceives languages other than English to hold little value. The resulting linguistic goal is *displacement bilingualism*, in which English takes over as the only means of communication of ELLs and the first language is lost (Johnson & Swain, 1997). Therefore, schools aim to develop ESL to a native-like proficiency, phasing the native language out of the classroom (Hernandez-Chavez, 1984). The educational institution perceives students’ proficiency in another language as a deficiency or deficit toward learning. Consequently, academic achievement only occurs in the students’ second language of English and not in their native language.

The discourse of English monolingualism begins with government and trickles down through districts, schools, administrators, and teachers, before directly affecting the linguistic assimilation of the ELL student. The top-down approach to Arizona language policy is “an authoritarian way of making policies and ... a form of social and political domination” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 140). As demonstrated in the teachers’ cultural models of language, the historically grounded monolingual cultural models influenced teachers’ discourse and social practices in the local setting. The following section is a discussion of the cultural models of ELLs, which bring together discourse on minority students and linguistic difference.

*Cultural Models of English Language Learners: “I have the kids that don’t get as much love.”*

Before school on an early November morning, teachers gathered in Erica’s classroom. Grounded in dialogue about how to define and describe ELLs, the teachers began to compare ELD classrooms at Maravilla.

*Jon:* She has ones, twos, threes... And I think back in the past, how I felt when I had kids who were really, really struggling and how I felt. “Well he can’t do it. He just can’t.” I would just kind of close off. How would I be with a different class with a lower language level? I don’t know. Would I have the same expectations with those kids? I don’t know. (to Erica) You have the very, very low kids?

*Cristy:* Those teachers are the ones and I wish they were part of this [teacher study group] because those are the ones [that struggle]. (to Gisela) You have the low [students].

*Gisela:* Um huh, I have the low [students].

*Cristy*: It is different. Fours are different than threes. In a sense it is good that the fours are all together because you can really teach the curriculum, you can change the grade level curriculum with that. You're able to back up and give these kids what they need, and accelerate them...

*Gisela*: I go a lot slower with my class... they're repeating everything I say, and it just goes a lot slower, even as compared to like my power hour group. I have the high fourth graders mainstream, and that group is just, they're so self-sufficient and then I come back to my class and I'm like, "Here come the babies." I don't think that way, but just trying to make a comparison right now, but it's just different. It's not good or bad, it's just different. I can't do a lot of grade level things. I don't want to say that they can't do it, some of them [can't] because I have the really low, and the really, really, really, really sped [Special Education]. (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

In the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, teachers described and discussed the ELLs in their classrooms. This section describes the dominant cultural models of ELLs reflected in teachers' discourse: (a) Deficit perspective at school and (b) Deficit perspective at home.

*Deficit perspective at school*: "They haven't fully gained the language, so they're low." The dominant cultural model of ELLs exhibited in teachers' discourse included the deficit perspective that presumed poor academic achievement. Rather than focusing on students' capabilities, teachers often concentrated on students' inabilities attributed to a lack of English proficiency. The deficit model for ELLs conceptualizes language as a problem (Ruiz,

1984) – an inhibitor to their learning in the classroom. Prevalent trends in the linguistic data demonstrated that teachers frequently referred to their students in a negative light. Deficit discourse included adjectives such as “low” and “slow” to describe students and negated verbs such as “can’t” and “don’t” to refer to the supposed limitations in academic ability.

Teachers’ discourse reflected the deficit cultural model of ELLs as being directly related to ELP. ELLs were considered of “low” academic performance capability because these students had not attained English proficiency. I sought to clarify this finding in my exit interview with Marcy and Erica.

*Amy:* In our [study] group and across the board when I talk to a lot of teachers, when you think about the ELD classes, they’re referred to as “the low class.” Why do you think that is?

*Marcy:* Um, because they [the students] haven’t fully gained the language, so they’re “low.” I guess that’s how. (Exit Interview, December 8, 2008)

Marcy recognized the relation between academic challenges and lack of English proficiency.

When asked about teachers’ referring to ELD classes as the “low class,” Erica responded,

I think sometimes people, [say things] like “low ELD,” “low” whatever. Or “mainstream,” you think “high.” And it’s not necessarily true, but to an extent, it is [true].... I know as a fact that not everybody in mainstream is on grade level, but I think that a majority of them are. And that’s very different than your ELD, where you might have a few on grade level and the majority of them are not. And if I think that for the mainstream, I also think that for the ELD, where there’s a few who are benchmarking, and the majority of

them are still not there. So, I think it kind of does go language [ability associated] with academic [performance]. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Erica's discourse revealed her vacillation from the dominant cultural model by using tentative language such as "I think" and "not necessarily." Nevertheless, her hesitation was paired with discourse that signaled the deficit viewpoint directly related to language proficiency. The teachers' discourse, framed by the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs, exposed two reasons for the ascription of the adjectives "low" to the ELD class: (a) ELLs' lack of proficiency in the English language and (b) the resulting division of students into ELD or mainstream (i.e., non-ELD, typical grade-level education) classrooms based on ELP.

*Deficit perspective at home: "They don't have a model at home."* Teachers often placed ELLs' lack of proficiency in English, and their resulting placement in the ELD classroom, on the parents. The deficit-based cultural model extended outside of school, due to a lack of English exposure in the home. Erica reported, "I have some parents who don't speak English, so it's gonna take them [ELLs] more time because they don't have a model at home either" (Initial Interview, August 11, 2008). Teachers also framed parents of ELLs negatively because of parents' inability to help with English language homework. Andrea explained,

They [parents] don't know how to help them [ELLs] and I've sent that spelling list home, and I've told parents to do that [spelling words] with their kids. But when they don't speak English, it's hard for them to work on that with them. I don't know. I just feel like there's definitely not a lot of parent involvement in my class in general. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Similar to the negative linguistic cues in the teachers' discourse on students, teachers used deficit language of "don't" and "not" to describe the parents of ELLs. Unknowingly grounded in the dominant cultural model of language that only values English, teachers did not recognize the linguistic exposure at home as a resource to students at school.

Besides some teachers' deficit-based perception of speaking non-English languages at home, teachers presumed ELLs and their families to be at a disadvantage academically based on accounts of the harsh reality of urban life, including poverty, violence, and legal status. When referencing external stressors that affected students and their families, teachers brought up examples from students' stories about their home lives such as shootings, drunken driving fatalities, domestic violence, job loss, and lack of financial resources.

Specific to the immigrant population, teachers found legal status to be a variable which affected both student achievement and parent involvement. Grounded in the anti-immigrant sentiments prevalent among residents in Phoenix (Kohut *et al.*, 2006), recent legislation and events placed additional fears on illegal immigrants. The *Legal Arizona Workers Act* of 2008, more commonly known as the *Employer Sanctions Law* (Goddard, 2008), made it difficult for illegal immigrants to secure work, placing large sanctions and fines on employers who knowingly hired workers without the proper papers. Andrea shared a story of a gifted ELL student that lost a college scholarship when her mother's legal status caused her to lose her job through the *Employer Sanctions Law*. Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio conducted highly controversial *crime suppression sweeps* (González, 2008a) that targeted areas of the Phoenix metropolitan area with known illegal immigrant populations. Cristy explained how parents' fears and realities of job loss and deportation outweighed concerns at school.



We send the letters home, but I don't think that they [parents] really pay attention to them, and I just think it's kind of gone over their heads. I mean, I think they're more aware of what's going on in the community with the immigration and Sheriff Joe and knowing that they're going to be sent back to Mexico if they get caught working without their proper papers and they're fleeing the state. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Teachers familiar with the realities faced by illegal immigrants perceived legal status as a detriment to parents' involvement or investment in their children's academic success.

Whereas teachers assumed ELLs to be at a deficit based on parental immigration status, most of the teachers were sensitive and empathetic with the families who wished to give their students a better life.

*Erica:* The immigration issue is so harsh and so bad now that I'm just wondering what it will be for them in a few years. Some of these parents already have ... to go back [to Mexico] because they can't find jobs. Basically they're living day by day, and some of them are like, "December we're leaving." (Initial Interview, August 11, 2008)

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*Jon:* I think it's really hard times for them [illegal immigrants]. I think they're, I kind of picture them kind of laying low.... Just kind of being afraid of Sheriff Joe [Arpaio] coming and getting them and sending them back to Mexico. (Exit Interview, December 13, 2008)

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*Mary:* She wasn't here yesterday, so I said, "Oh, were you sick yesterday?"

"Yeah, I was sick." And then she, in the same sentence said, "Yeah, my dad said that we can't go outside or go to school or anything because people [Sheriff Joe Arpaio] will take us or take my dad [in immigration crime sweeps]." (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

Many of the study group teachers recognized the "bad" and "hard" times faced by those families that entered the country illegally. Nevertheless, teachers' discourse did not acknowledge the sacrifice of many undocumented parents who risk their lives in the U.S. for their commitment to their children's academic opportunities.

*Institutional support of cultural models of English language learners.* The dominant cultural models of ELLs are grounded in Arizona language policies that (a) insisted on English-only language use, (b) insinuated that learning English is easy for non-native speakers, and (c) separated ELLs from mainstream students. Proposition 203 rationalizes the classroom separation and insinuates the ease of learning ESL:

Young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language, such as English, if they are heavily exposed to that language in the classroom at an early age. Therefore it is resolved that: All children in Arizona public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible. (Arizona Department of Education, 2000, p. 1)

Although exhaustive research has demonstrated that students need three to five years to learn a second language (Crawford & Krashen, 2007), the institutional discourse suggested that ELLs can "easily acquire full fluency ... rapidly and effectively." Due to the supposed

ease of learning English rapidly, the guidelines of the language policy expected ELLs to attain ELP in one school year; Proposition 203 states, “Children who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year” (Arizona Department of Education, 2000). The emphasis on the speed in which a student becomes proficient in English was one impetus behind the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs.

If the language policies provide the institutional framework for the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs, then the state-mandated training ensured its promulgation to all Arizona teachers with the concentration on the deficiencies of ELLs. The curriculum referred to ELLs with a deficit-based term – Limited English Proficient (LEP). Joanna Haver, a member of the ELL Taskforce and co-designer of the ELD approach, described the LEP student as one who “does not respond appropriately when spoken to,” “does not know the vocabulary of his or her peers,” “is difficult to understand,” and whose “grammatical errors are atypical of children of the same age” (Haver, 2003, p. 3). The SIOP textbook (Echevarría *et al.*, 2008), widely used in SEI teacher training, similarly ranked LEP students with struggling readers and outlined special education-based techniques to teach ELLs. These facts indicate that both the language policy and the corresponding teacher training operationalized the dominant cultural model of ELLs as *deficient*.

The ADE framed the ELD model as the panacea for the presupposed academic deficiencies above and beyond the perceived language deficiencies of ELLs. The ADE described the rationale behind instruction devoid of academic content.

The year of intensive instruction is designed to advance a student to English language proficiency, thereby moving the student into the mainstream classroom where they [*sic*] will have access to the curriculum allowing for academic success. The language skills are pre-requisite skills to academic content. (Arizona Department of Education, 2008a, p. 2)

The institutional structures set up a dichotomy between ELD and mainstream classrooms. The clear distinction of classroom designation became a part of the school discourse when talking about children. When conducting a Maravilla ELD inservice training for teachers, Cristy made a clear distinction about what the *average* child can do in each grade level versus what the ELL child can do in each grade level – a cut-and-dry explanation that makes the ELL child *different* from the average child.

Due to ELLs' presumed inability to become proficient in English in a short time frame, dominant cultural models construct ELLs as deficient. The segregation of students promulgated the dichotomy, as teachers assumed the mainstream class to be “high” and the ELD class to be “low” in achievement abilities, respectively. Students also picked up on the deficit ascription to the ELD classroom. In the sixth study group, held in late November, teachers described the social divide forming between ELD and mainstream classrooms.

*Molly:* They [ELLs] are getting frustrated... The day before the kids had said,  
“Why are we the dumb class?”

*Andrea:* I just had a talk with my kids about that too. They were like, “Ms. Farina’s class says that we’re the stupid class.”

*Gisela:* My kids asked me that yesterday too. I was explaining the AZELLA, and they were like, “So are we the dumb class?”

*Andrea:* They’re getting it now. Like, they get it [segregation between ELD and mainstream]. (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

Grounded in the expectation to learn English in one year, perceptions of ELLs’ academic deficiencies set up the deficit-based cultural models of students, parents, and families.

*English language learners in the figured world of English language development teaching.* Minority students, particularly those from urban settings, have long been juxtaposed from the *mainstream* in schools. Constructed by society as being from “materially, linguistically, and scholastically impoverished homes” (Murrell, 2007b, p. ix), the cultural models of urban, minority students indicate that diminished social resources outside of school lead to underperformance at school (Murrell, 2007a). The historical trend of minority students’ poor standardized test scores in comparison with mainstream peers’ scores led to the phenomena of the *achievement gap* – highlighting the inequality of educational outcomes for minority students, which lumps together African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans (Meece & Kurtz-Costes, 2001). The generic cultural models of minorities homogenize non-mainstream students and ignore the diversity and variation within minority groups.

The dominant cultural models of ELLs are grounded historically in similar discourse toward other minority groups. The Civil Rights Era brought about research that examined the damaging effects of poverty and racism on children that led to the “cultural deprivation” hypothesis throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Smith, 2004). In his documentation of African Americans in schools, Smith (2004) described mindless drills for students “to adopt the

mainstream worldview and ‘the standard culture’ for improved outcomes on standardized tests” (p. 226). McCarty and Watahomigie (2004) described societal perceptions of American Indian students as uncivilized compared to mainstream Americans; thus, education served as a source for both assimilation and civilization. Language difference played a role in the deficit perspective ascribed to both African American and American Indians; African American Vernacular English was considered substandard (Smith, 2004), and indigenous languages jeopardized cultural and linguistic assimilation (McCarty & Watahomigie, 2004).

Teachers’ discourse revealed cultural models specific to Latino ELLs distinct from other minority groups. Wells (2009) reported that, on top of the discrimination many minority groups face, Latinos face triple segregation – by ethnicity, language, and socio-economic status. Specifically, majority groups tend to stereotype Latinos because of cultural and ethnic uniqueness, a lack of proficiency in English or English with a particular Spanish accent, and frequency to be among lower household income brackets. Immigration status is a fourth factor that challenges a number of Latinos in Arizona, as individuals that enter the country illegally face job loss, deportation, and other life-changing ramifications if caught by immigration enforcement authorities. With the widespread anti-immigrant discourse and the resilient cultural models of English monolingualism, dominant cultural models of ELLs devalued Spanish, framed bilingualism as a deficit, and placed blame on immigration status.

The cultural models of ELLs built upon monolingual and assimilative societal discourse; Spanish use at home or school deters from the speed with which a student acquires ELP. The institutional structures (e.g., language policies and mandates) supported the cultural models teachers espoused, as the English-only language mandates, presumed the

linguistic and academic deficits of ELLs. English-only advocates designed SEI language policies in Arizona to encourage displacement bilingualism, which frames students' first language as a problem rather than a resource (Ruiz, 1984). With success measured in English-only, a student's first (non-English) language is seen as a hindrance – the factor to blame for being behind or below grade level (Brown & Souto-Manning, 2008).

*Cultural Models of Learning: “Do your best and you’ll no longer have to be a 3 or a 4 or a 2.”*

On a Tuesday morning in October, study group participants appeared stressed and serious when they gathered in Molly's classroom. As the ADE was auditing the district for ELD implementation that week, the staff had no idea if or when the auditors would visit Maravilla School. After discussing successes in the ELD classroom, teachers shifted to addressing classroom struggles. Erica shared her frustration with her students who raised their hands to answer a question, but did not articulate an answer when called on.

*Erica:* But I think that I've probably seen this difference [linguistic] because I [my classroom] am the mix, I have threes and fours, so I can see those [students] who – and I have some threes that I swear could be fours, I don't think they're three.

*Amy:* What do you see as the distinction between [a three and four]?

*Erica:* I won't say they learn things faster, but they do seem to pick up a little faster, and then their output [spoken English] is so different.

*Joni:* Between a four and a three? Yeah.

*Erica:* Oh, yes. Like the output is different. Like they're the kind of kids that will take the language objectives and remember to use it, they are the

ones that are a little bit more self-initiated. They will try to read, if you say point to the words and follow me, they will, these are seen as differences between a three and a four.

*Joni:* My home base is fours, and most of my kids rock... The kids that were coming from Nicole are either twos or threes; they're probably threes if they're coming to me because Nicole's teaching sounds and letters, so they're probably threes, but in power hour, I really notice that mix, that difference. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

In the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, teachers referred to students by the numerical label derived from the AZELLA. Recounting a discussion with her students, Gisela's emphasized, "Do your best [on the AZELLA] and you'll no longer have to be a 3 or a 4 or a 2" (Initial Interview, August 13, 2008). Students *were* their test score until the AZELLA showed differently. This section describes the cultural model of assessment reflected in teachers' discourse: (a) Numerical labels dictate student ability, and (b) Numerical labels determine instruction and achievement.

*Numerical labels dictate student ability:* "You can tell by the way they speak." Through the use of the AZELLA scores as numerical labels, students were reduced to numbers – their score of one through five on the language assessment, in which one indicates the poorest demonstration of English proficiency and five demonstrates the greatest English proficiency. The teachers' discourse insinuated that students with the same numerical score were essentially the same learner – a "three" learned in a particular way, which was distinct from



the manner in which a “four” learned. Teachers’ discourse frequently incorporated the numerical score to characterize an invariable set of student abilities and teacher expectations.

*Marcy:* They’re fours. So they’re pretty advanced actually. They’re pretty gifted, not gifted. I don’t have any gifted kids per se, but I think they’re pretty high. Like just when we were sorting out the whole second grade, they’re pretty high. They have a lot of their basic phonics and they’ve been reading their books pretty well in the second grade text. So I haven’t been dipping into first or anything like that. (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

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*Cristy:* I’m modeling a lesson today in a third grade classroom. They’re low students to begin with, which may be the reason why they’re scoring us threes, but she has ones, twos and threes... I knew I was going to get a lot of googely guck, because they don’t have the productive language yet to formulate, synthesize, come up with that main idea. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

Teachers utilized the students’ AZELLA score as a harbinger of their abilities in the classroom. Marcy equated fours with being “pretty advanced,” as her students’ scores were higher than the other ELD classrooms in the second grade. Utilizing students’ AZELLA scores to prepare for a lesson, Cristy entered the classroom with the low expectation that students would struggle to understand and participate in the lesson (e.g., “I knew I was going

to get a lot of googely guck because they don't have the productive language."). Teachers equated numerical label with student abilities, thus setting their expectations accordingly.

Besides the individual statements throughout the data that demonstrated the use of AZELLA scores, the use of numerical labels mediated the discourse of the teacher study group sessions. In the fourth study group session, Erica explained one of her challenges in the classroom, which was using strategic grouping in a classroom with all ELLs.

*Erica:* I only have six fours, but then I still have some threes that I think that they are more like a four. From that, the good [thing] is they're kind of like the lead, the model. They're the ones who are willing to help or they finish after and they help. But it's kind of like how Joni was saying. I see the ones who will tell you the answer, who are always raising their hand, who kind of model for the class. And the threes, sometimes they do have the answer but they don't want to say it.

*Amy:* What kind of thing could you do to encourage those students who don't want to respond to try to respond?

*Erica:* I think like the think-pair-share. And I try to sit, like if I know someone is a very low three with who I think is a four, or is a four, so they push it together.

*Joni:* (laughs) "I think she's a four."

*Erica:* You can kind of start telling who is and who's not, you can tell by the way they speak and the writing, a lot has come from the output, really is how I can tell the difference. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

Rather than refer to students by name, Erica described students' abilities based on numerical scores – “threes” and “fours.” By doing this, Erica created a dichotomy between the ELLs in her class, as “fours” are the models for English proficiency and “threes” fail to meet the same expectations. Erica briefly insinuated the variance between students within the AZELLA score, yet she continued to use the numerical discourse when she referred to a student as “a very low three.” The use of static, numeric labels based on AZELLA scores removed the complexity and diversity of learning needs among ELLs.

*Numerical labels determine instruction and achievement: “I have to think of them in numbers.”*

With the weight placed on the AZELLA score, Maravilla teachers designed and evaluated classroom instruction based on the content of the language proficiency test. Joni recounted a prototypical parent-teacher conference in which she attempted to convey to the parents of an ELL student what was involved in his ELD training:

We [the parents and I] really didn't go into a lot in depth, it was just, “Your child is in a room, is grouped by their language proficiency.” I showed them their AZELLA scores. I said, “At the end of the year we want Jesus to be at a five, and here's what we're working on. We're working really hard on writing because we think that if he can get his writing score up, then he'll be a five and next year he can be in mainstream.” (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

Joni's narration demonstrated the unambiguous characterization of the objective ELD classroom instruction – teach to the test so the student can move on to become *mainstream*. The use of pronouns in her discourse exhibited the shared investment in learning English;

the use of “we” to describe classroom goals demonstrated that assessment data did not only determine the success of students but also the efficacy of the ELD teacher.

The teachers’ discourse reflected the dominant cultural model of assessment, which made a student’s AZELLA score the main predictor of his or her success in school. As teachers did not refer to students by other test scores, such as the AIMS standardized state test, they placed more weight on students learning English than on learning content. As the ELD approach dictated that “learning English comes before content” (Arizona Department of Education, 2008b), some teachers internalized the institutional structure.

*Cristy:* They [ELLs] grow in two different ways, their English improves, and academically they grow tremendously, especially once that language is there.” (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Erica:* The positive thing is that it really does get us to teach English in different components it has, like in grammar and writing and vocabulary. Whereas before we would teach it but maybe not hit it as much. And we’ll see at the end of the year like the AZELLA will tell us if it really has made a difference. So I think that has been the good, being able to make sure we are teaching all those components of English. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Other Maravilla teachers did not agree with the ELD approach, particularly the segregation of students away from mainstream peers and the skill-based language instruction that failed to incorporate content areas such as science, social studies, and mathematics. The

teachers held competing cultural models of learning that went against the dominant cultural models supported by the ELD language policies and mandates.

*Andrea:* Educational theorists think that kids learn through their peers even better than they do from their teacher. So, when you take all the peers that know more [English] than them out, then you're left with a whole class to learn nothing but from one person. And that's the teacher, and I think that's dangerous. I think the kids are really going to lose out. (Initial Interview, August 4, 2008)

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*Joni:* I know from my training and from best practices and good research that one of the biggest strategies for teaching English language learners is to have models [fluent English speakers] in the classroom. And so, these kids [ELLs in the ELD classroom] don't have models. (Initial Interview, August 13, 2008)

The teachers' discourse reflected knowledge of second language acquisition theory (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008), but frustration that good practice for ELLs could not be carried out in the ELD classroom due to language policies. The institutional structures that supported the dominant cultural models won out, due to the strength and power of the top-down pressures for compliance with ELD mandates.

*Institutional support of cultural models of learning.* Similar institutional structures that supported the dominant cultural models of language and ELLs contributed to teachers' corresponding cultural models of learning. The English-only language policy that placed

value on one language for school success, paired with the isolation of ELLs into ELD classrooms devoid of content instruction, resulted in the dominant cultural model of learning as grounded in assessment. In the outline of ELD classroom mandates for the 2008-2009 school year, the ADE made clear, “Regardless of years in the program or academic achievement, SEI Classroom entry and exit is determined solely by the AZELLA score” (Arizona Department of Education, 2008a, p. 1). The importance of the AZELLA test shaped teachers’ discourse on what type of learning mattered.

Although administration and staff did not all agree with the language policies, they perceived the AZELLA as the *ticket out* of the ELD classroom. When I met with Principal Erick Johnson early in the school year, he explained his goal for all students to test proficient on AZELLA and exit the four-hour ELD program in one school year. Erick’s expectations were not made to comply with Proposition 203; rather, his expectations resulted from his disagreement with the ELD approach to teaching ELLs. In staff inservices, Mr. Johnson frequently emphasized to teachers that the number-one goal was to get students to proficiency; AZELLA was the only measure of proficiency, so teachers must *teach to the test*. His insistence came up in the third teacher study group meeting, as teachers discussed ways to design instruction to improve students’ AZELLA scores.

*Andrea:* I’m wondering if we can just like, as a daily warm-up or something to the day, do a sample [of the AZELLA test]. Because I feel like a lot of the scores have to do with unfamiliarity with the test.

*Amy:* I know Erick would probably appreciate that because he even said when I met with him a month ago or so, “We need to get the

teachers familiar with this, and I'm not saying teach to the test, but teach to the test."

*Andrea:* Understand it [the AZELLA].

*Amy:* His goal is to get these kids out [of the ELD tract].

*Andrea:* Because they wouldn't have this [ELD classroom] if they were all fours and fives.

*Amy:* Then there wouldn't need to be as many ELD teachers either.

*Andrea:* And we wouldn't have all the SpEd kids in one classroom.

*Jon:* We wouldn't have 20 boys and 5 girls.

*Erica:* That's my problem right now.

*Jon:* I have 17 boys and 6 girls.

*Andrea:* I started with 14 special ed. (Study Group 3, September 18, 2008)

Like the school principal, the teachers conceptualized the ELD approach as the root of classroom challenges. As the AZELLA assessment was the only way to exit students from the ELD classroom, the participants in the teacher study group emphasized students' AZELLA scores – demonstrating the teachers' plight to move students to proficiency.

To understand the assessment-centered cultural model, I brought the data to the attention of the participants in exit interviews. Molly's and Marcy's discourse affirmed the teachers' need to use the labels to make sense of the complexities in the ELD classroom.

*Molly:* There are no proficient English speakers, except for me, and I can't be grouped with all of them. So I have to think of them in numbers because then I can make sure that each grouping that I have is given

enough support in a way that is not over burdening those kids at a higher language proficiency. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Marcy.* Because a lot of the time, this is making a huge generalization, but if you look at the scores, they even out that way [students with higher AZELLA scores do better academically]. My kids in the beginning, they were scoring much higher than the ones- and twos-class on spelling tests. But I think that also has to do with the language ... because my kids understand the language a little bit more, and that's why they're fours. (Exit Interview, December 8, 2008)

Molly and Marcy recognized the numerical ascription as a “huge generalization,” which helped me to clarify how the cultural model functions for teachers – to simplify the complex assortment of students’ language and academic abilities in the classroom.

*Learning in the figured world of English language development teaching.* Effective instruction for students must be grounded in four types of learning environments (Bransford *et al.*, 2000): (a) the learner-centered classroom focuses on the student to build on their strengths, interests, and needs; (b) knowledge-centered instruction is concerned with the role of the teacher and how content is organized and presented; (c) assessment-centered instruction provides students with opportunities to test their understanding and receive feedback; and (d) community-centered classrooms encourage collaboration for learning together (Bransford *et al.*, 2000). Although an effective classroom should incorporate each of these



learning environments, the ELD teachers' discourse reflected the over-reliance on the assessment-centered environment to design, implement, and evaluate instruction of ELLs.

The role of assessment has changed dramatically in the past decade with the *age of accountability* in education – fueled by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law (Public Law 107-110, 2002). In order to hold schools and teachers accountable for student achievement, NCLB utilized mandatory standardized assessments to monitor students' academic growth, particularly urban schools with high populations of minority students. The law increased federal funding for schools in high-need neighborhoods, but tied to the monies were standards and benchmarks for students' achievement data on standardized assessments. Test scores were disaggregated by the race, ethnicity, and other factors for schools to prove they were worthy of federal funding – No test scores to demonstrate student achievement = No money. Scholars called the assessment-centered mandate of NCLB the most important to urban schools, in comparison to more affluent schools:

No longer would school districts be able to disguise the failure of those the federal funds were meant to target (children of color, the poor, and the handicapped), since the achievement scores of those children would be sorted out and reported separately. (Wood, 2004, p. ix)

With funding a function of standardized test scores, assessment-centered learning environments became the norm in the high-needs schools that depended on the money for integral resources for classroom instruction. Assessment-centered instruction led teachers to abandon effective pedagogy and practice to *teach to the test*, because their schools' funds, and, more personally relevant to teachers, their own jobs, were literally at stake. Gee (2004)

explained, “The recent standards, testing, and accountability regime has committed schools to supplying all children, especially poor children, with no more (and no less) than ‘the basics’” (p. 109). The staunch concentration on assessment diminished meaningful learning opportunities for students. In the case of ELD instruction in Arizona, ELLs receive less than the *basics*, as students do not receive grade-level, content-area instruction.

Besides the federally mandated standardized tests to demonstrate student achievement, the state of Arizona requires that ELLs take an additional test of language proficiency to determine labels and placements within schools. Language tests are social and political instruments used to propagate language standards: “The fact that tests have one criterion for correctness means that they are capable of perpetuating uniformity and standardization according to the predetermined and defined criteria” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 96). The standardized language assessment results in a classification system with clearly demarcated numeric labels to sort students: “The decision to classify students by their standardized achievement and aptitude tests valorizes some kinds of knowledge skills and renders other kinds invisible” (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 6). Language tests and the resulting static ascription of test scores deny the heterogeneity of ELLs, including students with different first languages, varying migration histories, and distinct exposure to literacy and formal schooling (Solano-Flores, 2008). Although classification is an engrained practice in human nature (Bowker & Star, 1999) and the broader realm of education (e.g., gifted, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed), the AZELLA test score labels were specific to ELLs – using a powerful political tool to maintain the English-only language policies, dichotomy between ELLs and mainstream students, and deficit-based discourse of ELLs.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter, I described the dominant cultural models that ELD teachers at Maravilla School used to figure the world. The institutional and social forces within the figured world of ELD teaching – paired with the minimal resources, high class sizes, and other obstacles to instruction – led teachers to rely on the cultural models to get through a day full of complexities. Teachers' lack of preparation to work with ELLs also leads to the reliance on dominant cultural models when faced with challenges in the ELD classroom.

Teachers' lack of knowledge about language, difficulties communicating with ELLs and their families, and inability to successfully address widely differing linguistic and academic skills in one class are exacerbated by common myths and misconceptions about ELLs and about learning a second language – all of which lead to the mis-education of ELLs. Appropriate preparation can directly address such misconceptions and ameliorate many of the challenges.

(Lucas & Grinberg, 2008, p. 609)

Dependent on past experiences and preparation with ELLs, teachers fluctuate and transform their dependence on the dominant cultural models. With the framework of the figured world of ELD teaching, in the next two chapters I explore how teachers varied in their espousal of the dominant cultural models. Chapter 5 includes an examination of the situated identities of individual teachers, whose varying identification with the figured world allowed them to accept or resist the dominant cultural models of language, ELLs, and learning. In Chapter 6, I delve into teachers' changes in discourses and cultural models as they socially constructed interpretations within the figured world of ELD teaching.

## CHAPTER 5

### Acceptance and Rejection of Dominant Cultural Models: Teachers' Situated Identities

#### Mediating Discourse

This chapter builds on the previous chapter and answers the second research question: *How do teachers' different situated identities mediate their discourses on ELLs?* Whereas the dominant cultural models described in Chapter 4 allowed teachers to make meaning of daily activities, the teachers had their own perspectives and identified in various ways with the expectations and routines of the figured world.

Although we inhabit figured worlds in which particular types of people and events are understood to exist and that we are affected by the expectations and the routines that are part of those worlds, we are not predisposed to particular ways of being. People in all social contexts have the capacity to act proactively within their worlds. (Compton-Lilly, 2007, p. 27)

The institutional structures in this study, such as language policies and mandates in Arizona schools, supported and sustained the dominant cultural models of language, ELLs, and learning. Nevertheless, teachers had the agency to either accept or reject the dominant cultural models, a phenomenon which was reflected in their discourse in the teacher study group.

The situated identities of the study participants affected the acceptance or rejection of the dominant cultural models. Teachers' situated identities led to varying behavior and participation within the figured world of ELD teaching. *Situated identities* are "different ways of participating in different sorts of social groups, cultures, and institutions" (Gee, 2005, p. 1). In a figured world, situated identities "trace our participation, especially our agency, in socially produced, culturally constructed activities" (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 40). Teachers take

on various situated identities dependent on the social context; in this study, various situated identities (e.g., parent, citizen, bilingual, monolingual, Latina, TFA, new teacher, and instructional coach) mediated teachers' participation and discourse in the figured world of ELD teaching. The construct of socially situated identity allowed my analysis of teachers' identity to go beyond the "general and static trio of 'race, class, and gender,'" (Gee, 2000, p. 99) typical in educational research.

As the research questions honed in specifically on the social construction of knowledge in the teacher study group, I selected the situated identities that stood out in the data as critical to mediating the teacher study group discourse on ELLs. In selecting this criterion for inclusion, I left out two aspects of situated identities represented in the data. First, I discerned situated identities that seemed to mediate individuals' discourse outside of the social setting of the teacher study group. For example, Erica's situated identity as an immigrant seemed to mediate her interview discourse when she described immigration issues and connected to her own past experiences with those of her students; because this situated identity did not appear to be salient during teachers' talk within the study groups, it did not fit the criterion for inclusion. Second, I recognized that other situated identities might have been operating in what was not said in the teacher study group; however, I chose to focus on situated identities enacted through talk instead of silences since the identities associated with silences were difficult to discern, trace and classify.

The three sections of this chapter describe the study group participants and the following socially situated identities: (a) The Instructional Coach, (b) The New Teacher, and (c) The Social Activist. Cristy, the instructional coach, mediated the study group discourse

with her position of leadership in the school, as she held power to hold teachers in compliance with the ELD implementation. Marcy, the first year teacher, exemplified the educational hierarchy through her lack of power and position in the figured world of ELD teaching, as she starkly changed her social language based on the presence or absence of Cristy. Molly, the social activist, mediated the study group discourse due to her cognizance of dominant cultural models and willingness to push beyond policy to focus on practice. In each section, I first introduce the participant and the situated identity that traced her participation in the figured world. I then present and analyze the data to demonstrate how the teachers' situated identities mediated their discourse in the teacher study group. I close with discussion of the role of the situated identity in the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School.

### *The Instructional Coach*

Figured worlds are organized around positions of status and influence (Holland *et al.*, 1998); within the educational institution, teachers take on different positions of power within schools. In this study, the *instructional coach* served as an institutional identity (Gee, 2000) that mediated the discourse of the teacher study group. Gee (2000) described an institutional identity as grounded in a position within an institution that determines the amount or degree of power an individual holds. Institutional authorities determine the power and positions: "Laws, rules, traditions, or principles of various sorts allow the authorities to 'author' the position ... and to 'author' its occupant in terms of holding the rights and responsibilities that go with that position" (p. 102).

In this study, educational authorities at the district office charged Cristy with the ELD implementation and ADE compliance at Maravilla School. After six years as a primary classroom teacher and six years as a reading interventionist, Cristy became an instructional coach at Maravilla two years prior to the study (i.e., her 14<sup>th</sup> year post-undergraduate graduation). With the enactment of the new ELD approach to ELL instruction, Cristy's role at the school changed drastically. Instead of coaching and supporting primary teachers in classroom instruction, her main duty became the implementation of the state-mandated ELD instruction. Cristy was charged to train, prepare, and monitor the ELD teachers to comply with ADE guidelines. Cristy's discourse in the teacher study group was framed by her situated identity of the instructional coach – the school leader responsible for teachers' adherence to state mandates.

In this section, I analyze and discuss how Cristy's institutional identity as the instructional coach mediated the study group discourse over the duration of the semester-long research. I explain the situated identity of the instructional coach in three sections: (a) Authoritative discourse: Enactment of top-down language policy, (b) Shifting of authoritative discourse: Top-down pressures ease, and (c) The instructional coach in the figured world of English language development teaching.

*Authoritative discourse: Enactment of top-down language policy.* At the commencement of the first teacher study group, I was unaware Cristy (i.e., the instructional coach) planned to participate. She was present at the Maravilla staff meeting where I invited ELD teachers to take part in the research; however, Cristy only approached me after the meeting to express concern about the alignment of our messaging about ELD compliance. She seemed to be

uncomfortable that I might undermine her authority and encourage teachers to disregard the ELD rules. On the morning of the first teacher study group, the teachers were comfortable around a table in Molly's classroom, dialoguing about meaningful instruction for ELLs over coffee and bagels. We started the session with a collective compilation of study group norms, which included the expectation to focus conversation on student achievement. Cristy abruptly arrived halfway through the meeting.

While Cristy got settled at a desk away from the rest of the group, the teachers dialogued about how to use centers (e.g., student-centered approach to instruction, in which students engage in different activities at their own paces) to teach the ELD components of reading, writing, conversation, grammar, and vocabulary. Cristy interrupted the trajectory of the conversation from her observational position outside of the group to assert, "But we have to have those four hours. We have to have those subjects, and we have to be teaching them for that amount of time" (Study Group 1, August 19, 2008). In this example and others, she utilized *authorization* (Fairclough, 2003, p. 98), legitimizing her claims through reference to the authority of the institutional language policy. Cristy's discourse emphasized obligation – what teachers "have to" do to remain in compliance with the law.

The discourse that followed in the first study group established the use of authorization to control the flow of conversation. After Cristy's entrance shifted the dialogue to focus on enacting ELD policies, teachers contemplated how to set up their daily classroom schedules to meet the mandates. When Molly brought up the idea of differentiating instruction to meet the individualized needs of learners, Cristy warned that each lesson must be documented with language objectives.



*Cristy:* You have to have a language performance objective and the language content objective written out for that. I mean that's – they're [district-level employees] running scared right now because of the documentation that we have to show [to ADE]. And when they [ADE] come in, I don't know if we just do a dog-and-pony show for the day they come in [for compliance audit] and it [instruction] looks a little different.

*Amy:* Well, I want to – if no one minds, I want to bring it back [to the study group topic of meaningful instruction]. I feel like so often we get so caught up in the state requirements, which we have to, but let's get back to students, since we said that was going to be our focus.

*Cristy:* Can I? I mean I am so there with you, I am so – 'cause this is, I mean we've been going round and round with the district as coaches that we're being mandated as coaches that this is the way it has to be for now [strictly following ELD mandates]. And we, they [district-level employees] said, "We know what's best for kids, but we have to do this because we're in corrective action."

*Amy:* Okay.

*Cristy:* So, I just don't want to send two messages to the teachers, though, in saying that we can do this or can't. (Study Group 1, August 19, 2008)

Cristy's discourse reflected the urgency for compliance with state mandates – fueled by pressure from the district in preparation for the ADE audit. Assertions such as "You *have to*

have a language objective” (emphasis added) and “We *have to* do this because we’re in corrective action” (emphasis added) demonstrated Cristy’s “have to” statements that legitimized her insistence on following the language policies set by ADE. Although the first half of the teacher study group had maintained a focus on meaningful instruction, Cristy shifted the collective discourse away from the original topic to hone in on compliance to language policy.

Upon conclusion of the first teacher study group, I departed from Molly’s classroom extremely frustrated with the events precipitated by Cristy’s entrance into the group. I was concerned that her presence would (a) deter teachers from openly sharing their concerns and struggles in the ELD classroom and (b) limit opportunities for teacher learning with consistent emphasis on strict policy compliance rather than meaningful instruction for ELLs. With these concerns in mind, I approached Cristy in her office after the study group session to talk about her role in the upcoming teacher study groups. I wrote a memo to document my observations and reflections from our discussion:

She [Cristy] almost started to cry – telling me how much pressure she was under in her position. Due to past scrutiny by the state department, the district is apparently being over-cautious and really tight on all schools to over-compensate and follow the new laws times twenty. Cristy had just attended a meeting at the district office and was really feeling the pressure of the district pushing the state mandates on their shoulders. This frustration came out in the meeting when she completely took over our conversation and turned our study group dialogue into “meeting state mandates or else.” I

felt sorry for her – this is not what she signed up for as an instructional coach. She cares about the students and teachers at Maravilla, which she stated multiple times through teary eyes, but [she] is really feeling the pressure of her position through the district office, via the state pressure on the district to comply. (Memo, August 19, 2008)

Cristy's disclosure of her stress and anxiety made me conscious of the top-down nature of the policy implementation and her personal struggle with the institutional identity imposed by her position as the instruction coach.

At our initial interview, which took place after the first study group due to her delayed decision to participate in the research, her discourse was less rigid and reflected her consciousness of the top-down pressures from district and state.

We feel we're one step ahead of these teachers, and that's the other thing, we're supposed to be experts in this field, and who is an expert in this field at this point? Especially us [instructional coaches], I mean, this is the first year really implementing [ELD mandates] at a deep level; I was more of a reading coach last year ... so, I feel like I'm playing catch-up. (Initial Interview, September 18, 2008)

Cristy struggled with the new responsibilities of language policy implementation required of her position as instructional coach. She revealed her frustration with the top-down implementation, as she felt only "one step ahead" of the teachers. For the next two study groups, all held temporally before the ADE audit of the district, Cristy remained consistent

in her emphasis on compliance and continued to discuss the top-down pressures placed on her as the instructional coach.

*Shifting of authoritative discourse: Top-down pressures ease.* Cristy's discourse changed throughout the duration of the semester. In early study group conversations, Cristy's strong voice as an instructional coach ensured the discussion remained in line with ELD mandates. In contrast, in later study group meetings, Cristy's voice as an expert teacher shared pedagogical and practical ideas and activities for ELLs and encouraged teachers to disregard language policy. The shift occurred after the October ADE compliance audit of the district. After the looming date had passed, Cristy stated to the study group teachers, "We're still going to be required to teach the time [the required four hours of ELD instruction] but I think we can be a little more – I think we [instructional coaches] felt like with the state coming, it really needs to be cut and dry" (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008). Cristy referenced the change in compliance pressure from the district curriculum coordinator, which allowed for her shift in discourse that moved away from the state mandates.

In early November, the teacher study group met in Erica's classroom. Sitting in a circle around a group of student desks, teachers discussed the shared struggle to meet ELD guidelines and new expectations from *West Ed*, a consulting organization hired by the district to work with the entire Maravilla staff on other areas of instruction (e.g., student engagement and curriculum alignment across grade levels).

*Gisela:* I've had to step back and say, "I need to take more time for my kids."

*Joni:* I mean, I didn't think about that until you brought it up, but I would kind of like to extend [the content] into the next week, because, what

I was saying was, I taught a reading comprehension [lesson] yesterday, but I didn't get to the anthology [from the reading curriculum]. It's Thursday, and we have not read the anthology stories.

*Mary:* Yeah, same. It [running out of time] happens a lot.

*Joni:* I think that's a reasonable solution [extending into the next week]. The problem is that we've been told, coming down from West Ed, that we need to be caught up in the curriculum map because the new alignment is coming out for third quarter and we need to be on the same page [as mainstream classrooms]. See what I'm saying?

*Cristy:* I have maybe a partial solution from a conversation I had [with the district curriculum coordinator] yesterday, and it's something we've been talking about in this meeting. And it is that, "An hour of grammar, an hour of vocabulary, and we've got all these reading standards to teach? C'mon, give me a break." We do see the value, I think we've all seen the value in grammar, the value in vocabulary, and it's important, but do we really need to spend an hour a day on it? She gave us permission to start integrating more, and without saying it out loud, saying, "You don't have to spend an hour everyday."

*Andrea:* (laughs) Sorry.

*Cristy*: And she said she had that conversation with the state department, and the people that are on the [ELD] task force come from a high school [teaching] background, and she says she thinks that's why they set it [ELD mandates] up that way. And it might work for high school, but here in elementary grades, it [ELD content areas] needs to be integrated. So, if you can start shortening some of the time you're spending on those things [ELD content areas], then it might solve this problem [not having enough time to teach all mandated content from West Ed].

*Amy*: Do you think it's [compliance with ELD mandates] more lax because the state visit is done and over with?

*Cristy*: Yeah, we had to apply [the ELD mandates] because that's what they [ADE] were going to be looking for. We had to apply all of this and follow the rules .... They're [ADE] gone, she [district curriculum coordinator] doesn't feel they're coming back, and she knows integration is what's good for kids and that we need guided reading and we're not getting guided reading. And, you know, let's put it in some of the centers, like we talked about originally wanting to do [but couldn't], because the state was coming. And that's where I was feeling the pressure and discombobulation, because philosophically I didn't agree, but I was being told this [strict compliance] is what needs to be done. "We've got to make sure our teachers are doing

this.” So, I think we have a little more freedom there. We still need to make sure we have vocabulary taught, grammar taught, we have our objectives, but the minute clock – the Gestapo is not going to come checking your minutes. (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

In this passage from the fifth study group, two linguistic cues became prevalent in Cristy’s discourse. First, whereas she initially strictly enforced state mandates, Cristy’s discourse changed to questions doubtful of the efficacy of the language policies (e.g., “Do we really need to spend an hour a day on it?”). The completed state auditors’ visit removed much of the pressure for rigid ELD implementation; Cristy felt at liberty to reveal her skepticism of language mandates based in her knowledge of effective pedagogy for students. Second, the *authorization* (Fairclough, 2003, p. 98) in her discourse that she used to legitimize the ELD implementations shifted from present (e.g., “We have to do this because we’re in corrective action”; Study Group 1, August 19, 2008) to past tense (e.g., “We had to apply all of this and follow the rules”; Study Group 5, November 6, 2008). Cristy’s utilization of past-tense verbs in the latter study group revealed that the pressures to comply with ELD mandates had passed with the state audit in October.

Cristy’s shift in discourse away from policy-driven, ELD mandates mediated the discourse of the teacher study group in two ways. On one hand, teachers became frustrated with the sudden change in expectations for instruction. In the dialogue outlined above, video data revealed how Andrea sarcastically laughed and exchanged scoffs with other teachers as Cristy explained that the mandates she once strictly enforced were no longer the guiding force for ELD instruction. The teachers’ frustration came out more bluntly in the final

teacher study group meeting, when, markedly, Cristy was not present; therefore, Cristy's institutional identity of instructional coach mediated teachers' discourse at the study group meetings – both in presence and absence. At the final teacher study group in Cristy's absence, teachers divulged thoughts and opinions about the ELD implementation at Maravilla.

*Marcy:* It's frustrating, because they [instructional coaches] crammed all this ELD stuff in, and last night [at a staff meeting] they're, like, out the door. Not a big deal.

*Joni:* Are we going to be monitored [by ADE] again? And then we're gonna have to go back to, you know [complying with ELD mandates].

*Marcy:* And then I'm just going to hold up a sign that says "West Ed." (*laughs*)

*Amy:* So what happens when the state says that they're coming back in March?

*Marcy:* And they [instructional coaches] all freak out again. All of the minutes have to be broken down.

*Erica:* Make sure you have your clock on.

*Marcy:* I feel like I'm a rag doll: Go this way, now go this way. (Study Group 7, December 4, 2008)

Whereas Marcy, Erica, and Joni contributed the least when Cristy was in attendance, they felt comfortable to outwardly criticize the school leadership's ELD implementation in her absence. Marcy asserted, "I just feel like I do one thing and I'm kind of like starting to get it and they're [instructional coaches] like 'Rrrrip! Let's do something else' .... I feel like



I'm constantly changing" (Study Group 7, December 4, 2008). The teachers' discourse referred to the top-down sequence of events that occurred after the state audit of the district: The completed state visit lessened anxiety at the district office, which eased pressure on the school leaders, which reduced constraints on the ELD teachers. After adjusting to comply with the new mandates, ELD teachers became frustrated when told to change instruction once again.

On the other hand, as Cristy's discourse moved away from top-down mandates, the study group discussions also shifted to spotlight student-centered practice rather than language policy implementation. This change in participation with the study group allowed for the social construction of teacher learning, which I discuss further in Chapter 6.

*The instructional coach in the figured world of English language development teaching.* In the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School, the power and positions afforded to participants mediated the discourse of the teacher study group. Holland *et al.* (1998) explained, "Our communications with one another not only convey messages but also always make claims about who we are relative to one another and the nature of our relationship" (p. 26). Both Cristy's presence and absence mediated the discourse of the other participating ELD teachers in the teacher study group and demonstrated the elevated rank and status that Cristy held at Maravilla School in comparison to the ELD classroom teachers. Cristy, the instructional coach, asserted her authority in the teacher study group due to her responsibility to enforce the ADE requirements for ELD instruction.

Nevertheless, Cristy's position as Maravilla's instructional coach placed her under the authority of the school district and state department. Top-down mandates and pressures,

which often came with little time to prepare teachers for proper implementation, mediated Cristy's discourse. When state ELD mandates went into effect at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, the ADE had yet to completely flesh out the design of the ELD approach to instruction, yet the ADE expected teachers to adjust and comply with hastily drawn ELD plans and requirements. Through the school year, the state passed along new policy mandates to districts that then pressured schools for immediate compliance. Cristy's disclaimer in staff professional development inservices (e.g., "We just got this information on Monday [two days prior] and are passing it on to you"; Memo, August 13, 2008) gave a clear depiction of the quick turn-around expected of teachers to comply with top-down mandates. After the ADE audit passed, the district became more lax in the effort to ensure 100% compliance. Cristy's shift in discourse reflected the modified pressures from the top down.

Top-down policies are the institutional structures that support the dominant cultural models that teachers use to make sense of daily practice in the figured world of teaching. Due to the strength of the institution, the dominant cultural models can overpower the agency of teachers – even veteran educators with strong pedagogical backgrounds. Assaf (2008) studied the professional identity of a reading specialist who toiled with tensions between knowledge of good pedagogy and district pressure for high standardized test scores. The competing commitments forced the reading coach to make integral decisions that affected students – plan instruction for meaningful learning experiences or for improved standardized test scores. The top-down pressures from the district for students to perform

on high-stakes tests won out, and the reading teacher taught to the test – succumbing to the assessment-centered dominant cultural model of learning.

Similar to the reading coach in Assaf's (2008) research, Cristy faced similar personal struggles with her institutional identity of the instructional coach – caught between following policy and enacting good practice. Cristy's role positioned her as the individual at Maravilla responsible for carrying out the language policies and mandates required by the state and following through on the pressures for compliance. State, district, and school administrators expected her to blindly enforce teachers to comply with the ELD instructional model, even though she "philosophically didn't agree" (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008) with the skill-based approach to teaching ELLs.

Although perceived as a cold executioner of ELD policies, Cristy was a victim of the top-down instructional mandates. Beneath the institutional demands she felt responsible to enact, Cristy cared about students and endorsed good practice and pedagogy to meet learning students' learning needs. When I asked why she became an educator, she professed, "I was always a school person. I loved learning. Learning was easy for me. I love kids. That's [teaching] been my passion. That pretty much sums it up. It was always what I wanted to do" (Initial Interview, September 18, 2008). Fueled by her passion for teaching children, Cristy sought to improve herself as an educator through her continuing professional degrees and certifications, including her Masters degree in Elementary Education and additional certifications in ESL and Reading. She displayed her scholarly expertise in education through her frequent reference to research on reading, language development, and second language acquisition (e.g., "The year mandate that [expects that] they [ELLs] are going to learn

English in a year. We know research does not support that. It's not going to happen.” Exit Interview, December 9, 2008). Cristy defined herself as a “caregiver” for her family, as well as Maravilla students and teachers. She described the tensions between her self-perceived caregiver identity and her institutional role as the instructional coach. “I have to be tough sometimes. And I have to put it out on the line because in the end, it's what's good for kids. And I'm a caregiver for kids” (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008).

Cristy's discourse over the duration of the semester-long research reflected the power of the institutional pressures. As the compliance demands from the district diminished, Cristy shifted to more practice-centered dialogue. As the top-down language policies – the main institutional structures that upheld the dominant cultural models in the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School – were not as strictly enforced, Cristy utilized her agency to hold competing cultural models.

As the instructional coach afforded a degree of power at Maravilla School, Cristy's institutional identity allowed her to shift her discourse as top-down, institutional pressures diminished. Marcy, a first-year teacher, had little power afforded to her by the institution in her role as a new teacher. Conversely, the different power and position in the situated identities of instructional coach and the new teacher mediated Marcy's discourse in the teacher study group. Marcy's situated identity of the new teacher is described in the next section.

### *The New Teacher*

The figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School comprised of relationships supported by larger, institutional structures of power that included an “element of rank and

status” (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 59). The institutional identity that positioned Cristy in a leadership position at Maravilla School also mediated the discourse of the other teachers in the study group, particularly that of the *new teacher*, Marcy. The institutional identity (Gee, 2000) of the new teacher positioned Marcy as subordinate to Cristy, as she was under increased scrutiny compared to other teachers who had previously taught at Maravilla School. The distinct positions and various levels of power afforded to them mediated the discourse within the teacher study group. Therefore, the situated identity of the new teacher mediated Marcy’s discourse on ELLs in the teacher study group, as her role as a first-year teacher positioned her at the bottom of the power structure maintained within the top-down educational institution.

In this section, I analyze and discuss Marcy’s identity as the new teacher at Maravilla School. Structures within the educational institution, which assume expertise only after years of practice in the classroom, supported the marginalized role of the new teacher. Nevertheless, Marcy utilized different social languages to enact her situated identity as the new teacher for different purposes within the teacher study group. I describe Marcy’s situated identity of the new teacher in three sections: (a) The new teacher at Maravilla School, (b) Formal versus informal: Marcy’s different social languages, and (c) The new teacher in the figured world of English language development teaching.

*The new teacher at Maravilla School.* Marcy moved from the Pacific Northwest to Arizona to begin her teaching career at Maravilla School at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year. Graduating with a degree in ESL, she was immediately considered *highly qualified* by ADE to teach in the ELD classroom. As many Maravilla teachers had not fulfilled state

SEI requirements to be *highly qualified*, Principal Johnson assigned an ELD classroom to Marcy as a first-year teacher.

The hierarchy of teachers at Maravilla School presumed the new teacher to be sub-standard to the veteran teacher. Although Marcy came with a strong background and experience in teaching ESL, she assumed the role of the *unknowing* first-year teacher. After Molly confidently shared her incorporation of meaningful literacy activities in the ELD classroom, Marcy comparatively responded about her difficulties.

*Marcy:* I don't know if it [feeling comfortable teaching ELD] just comes with time. Maybe I feel like just because it's my first year that I'm like, "I don't know how to teach this." And then eventually, I mean with more experience.

*Gisela:* I think that [is right], yeah. In sixth grade, in my first year, I was like, "What do I do?" And by third or fourth year teaching sixth grade, I'm like, "Okay, let's go." And I knew everything, you know?

*Marcy:* Yeah. I know. I think that's what I have to tell myself too sometimes.

You can't do it all. (Study Group 1, August 19, 2008)

Gisela, who remembered her own experiences in the new teacher role, utilized discourse that contributed to Marcy's acceptance of her inferior position within the hierarchy of teachers at Maravilla.

Marcy was under close scrutiny by Cristy, the instructional coach – both as a new teacher at Maravilla and as an ELD teacher responsible for compliance with new policies with which she was unfamiliar. Cristy's discourse demonstrated the positional spectrum of

teachers within the educational institution based on tenure in the classroom. When describing the teachers that participated in the study group, Cristy asserted,

You had the gamut [of teachers] in there. You had brand-new teachers all the way to veteran teachers .... That was good that they were exposed to the conversation with some of the more expert teachers and sharing those ideas. It's always good for them. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

The school principal further slighted the position of the new teacher. In the sixth study group, teachers conversed about the divide between mainstream and ELD teachers at Maravilla. Before Cristy arrived to the meeting, teachers shared frustrations with how school administration selected teachers to work in the ELD classroom.

*Gisela:* I had asked for Erin's [mainstream] class because I didn't want to teach ELD because I did it last year. I asked for Erin's class ... and Erick said, "No, she's a first-year teacher. I don't think she's prepared. I don't think she's up for teaching an ELD class." Know what I mean?

*Marcy:* Huh? (*points to herself*)

*Andrea:* (*laughs at Marcy*) But Marcy is [a new teacher who is teaching an ELD class]!

*Gisela:* She is, right, exactly. She's right out of – and this is a quote, okay?

"She's a baby." That's what he [Erick] told me.

*Andrea:* That's what he told me too: "Moving a baby teacher up to a new grade level." (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

The teachers voiced the aggravation that new teachers received the esteemed mainstream classroom placements, leaving veteran teachers to the challenging ELD classrooms.

Nevertheless, Andrea pointed out the inconsistency, as Marcy (e.g., a new teacher and teacher study group participant) taught in the ELD classroom. Regardless, the leadership team at Maravilla School, including the principal and instructional coach, positioned the new teacher in such an inferior role that they were labeled the “babies” of the school faculty.

*Formal versus informal: Marcy’s different social languages.* As described in the previous section, teachers’ discourse varied in the study group sessions based on the presence or absence of Cristy. The institutional identity of the new teacher made Marcy more aware of the power structure at Maravilla – particularly her position in respect to Cristy as her superior on the school leadership team. The use of different social languages mediated the various facets of Marcy’s situated identity of a new teacher. Gee (2005) described social languages: “People use different styles or varieties of language for different purposes. They use different varieties of language to enact and recognize different identities in different settings” (p. 20). When the instructional coach was present, Marcy utilized formal language that referenced the ELD mandates and rigidly followed Cristy’s expectations to accommodate the demands of her superior. Marcy’s social language shifted to more casual and informal when Cristy was not present and she conversed with me and other teachers to share her skepticism of ELD mandates.

Marcy’s distinct social languages were exemplified through her discourse on the use of language objectives in ELD classroom instruction. ADE required teachers to ground all lesson plans in the ELP standards, specifically for ELL instruction and separate from grade-



level, content-area standards. Cristy emphasized in staff meetings and study group sessions the urgent necessity to include language objectives, derived from the ELP standards, in every lesson plan to maintain compliance with state requirements.

At a teacher study group session when Cristy was present, Marcy's discourse strongly reflected the institutional structures (e.g., language policies) and accommodated the compliance demands by the leadership at Maravilla School. In the fourth teacher study group, teachers gathered in Molly's classroom before school. To begin the conversation, teachers engaged in dialogue about successes in the ELD classroom.

*Molly:* It's meeting them [students] at the instructional level. It is tremendously improving their English speaking, their reading, their writing, at all levels. So, that's been really good to see, and to hear their discussions, and to hear them use the things that we're learning and talking about, and to hear them invested is really exciting.

*Amy:* Have you all seen that growth too?

*All:* (silence, nods)

*Amy:* (to Marcy) How have you seen it?

*Marcy:* One of my things is using our language objective throughout the lesson, and I really try to do that in other spots like in writing and stuff. So, if I drill that language objective into them, I hear them [students] use it [language objective] in other places, like, "This is a proper noun because it names something." And I'm like, "The language objective we've been saying!" So ..., that's good, that's kind

of my goal, to drill the language objective in enough that they're going to say it in their sleep. (Study Group 4, October 21, 2008)

After Molly's narrative describing her students' English language growth, I prompted Marcy to explain students' accomplishments in her classroom. Marcy was typically reserved in Cristy's presence, and I often had to urge her to share thoughts and ideas. When she did share, she gave the behaviorist depiction of the need to "drill the language objective in enough that they're going to say it in their sleep." Her discourse about the importance of the language objective mirrored, or accommodated, Cristy's emphasis on adherence to the ELD mandates.

Conversely, Marcy held other thoughts about the role of language objectives in planning ELD instruction for her students. Only weeks prior in the second study group session held in her classroom, Marcy and I started to dialogue about the successes and challenges in the classroom while waiting for others to arrive. While she conversed with me, her discourse exposed an informal social language to share her frustrations with the required use of language objectives to plan all instruction.

*Marcy:* What I do is I plan my lessons, and then I go back and kind of mold them [language objectives] to fit. So, it's really not that bad like the way that they [instructional coaches] presented it. It's [instructional coaches' presentation] a lot of BS.

*Amy:* Isn't that sad? That that's basically all it [ELD policy] is? All of this headache and noise, and all [of] it is BS.

*Marcy*: I mean, I pretty much follow it [language objective] in the classroom,  
but I get off topic. So, again, BS. (Study Group 2, September 4, 2008)

Very distinct from her discourse that manifested the staunch importance of “drilling the language objective into students,” Marcy utilized an informal social language to share her thoughts on the reliance on language objectives as *BS* (e.g., bullshit). In Cristy’s presence, her situated identity as a new teacher mediated her discourse to meet the regulations and expectations that the instructional coach had set out for ELD teachers. In Cristy’s absence, she shared her skepticism of the ELD mandates as being relatively futile to her classroom instruction.

*The new teacher in the figured world of English language development teaching.* In the figured world of ELD teaching, Marcy’s institutional identity of the new teacher positioned her at the bottom of the top-down power structure within the educational institution. Danielewicz (2001) described how new teachers go about the process of forming their identity to be perceived by others as teachers. The author explained, “Identities then are the result of dynamic interplay between discursive processes that are internal (to the individual) and external (involving everyone else)” (p. 11). Dependent on the context and those participating around her, Marcy situated her identity accordingly – reflecting more of her own internal discourse with informal social language and reproducing the external discourse of the institution with formal social language.

Further, new teachers face tensions between their knowledge from teacher preparation and the pressures at school sites, which shape and situate their identities in the social context. Smagorinsky and colleagues (2004) utilized the lens of identity to analyze a

new teacher, Sharon, and her tensions of learning to teach. Marcy and Sharon, both new teachers, had similar experiences and conflicts that situated their identities as new teachers. The term *accommodation* defines the way in which the new teacher deferred to more powerful institutional forces. Similar to Sharon and the response to her mentor teacher, Marcy accommodated the dominant “vision of effective teaching to preserve a positive relationship and receive a supportive evaluation” (Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2004, p. 19). The imposing presence of the instructional coach in the teacher study group shaped the discourse of the new teacher who was still in the process of dealing with the tensions of *becoming* a teacher.

As a first-year teacher still in the process of *becoming* a teacher, Marcy was more vulnerable to the power differential and shifted her discourse to meet Cristy’s demands and expectations. Molly, a third-year teacher, was more resistant to the power and position of Cristy’s institutional identity. Molly’s situated identity of a social activist is described in the next section.

### *The Social Activist*

As previously described, the dominant cultural models in the figured world of ELD teaching provide the interpretational framework for teachers to make meaning of the complexities in daily classroom practice. As the dominant cultural models of language, ELLs, and learning often reproduced structures of privilege and separated dominant and subordinate, some teachers actively resisted. Holland *et al.* (1998) described how individuals actively resist in the figured world:

People sometimes fix upon objectifications of themselves that they find unacceptable. These objectifications become the organizing basis of

resentment and often of more active resistance. When individuals learn about figured worlds and come, in some sense, to identify themselves in those worlds, their participation may include reactions to the treatment they have received as occupants of the positions figured by the worlds. (p. 143)

In this study, Molly demonstrated her cognizance with many of the dominant cultural models and the institutional structures that sustained them. She actively resisted unacceptable cultural models and therefore took on the situated identity of a *social activist*. Her social consciousness led to what she termed *silent defiance* – refusing to accept the institutional demands that she perceived to contradict good instruction for ELLs.

Molly's situated identity of the social activist stemmed from her own experiences with educational inequities and her teacher preparation in TFA. Growing up in a poverty-stricken Florida town, Molly excelled at school – unaware of the low expectations set by her teachers. She was the first from her family and community to attend a four-year university, where she struggled with the academic rigor and high expectations. Her personal experiences fueled Molly to work diligently to improve her performance at the university and become a teacher who ensured students received the quality and rigorous education she did not receive. After graduating with honors, Molly joined TFA and moved to Arizona in 2006 to follow the group's mission to close the ethnic *achievement gap* by placing teachers in high-poverty, high-need school districts. Although only in her third year of teaching, Molly was considered an expert in the field by many – already recognized with a number of honors, including *Rookie Teacher of the Year* and the *Teaching for Social Justice Award*.

In this section, I examine the social activist identity by scrutinizing Molly's affinity and discourse identities (Gee, 2000). I also analyze and discuss how Molly enacted the situated identity of the social activist to mediate discourse in the teacher study group, as she recognized the dominant cultural models, maintained high expectations for herself and her students, and supported the small group as teachers grappled with policy and practice. I explain the situated identity of the social activist in three sections: (a) Affinity identity: Molly as a Teach for America alumna, (b) Discourse identity: Molly as a social activist, and (c) The social activist in the figured world of English language development teaching.

*Affinity identity: Molly as a Teach for America alumna.* Molly's career in education began through the TFA program, as did mine. TFA recruits college graduates from across the nation – typically individuals with non-education degrees – to teach in low-income, high-need schools. With undergraduate degrees in Economics and Chinese, Molly decided this path after her own experiences with educational inequities; she explained, “I had been a victim of a poor education when that wasn't what my potential was .... So, that's what made me join Teach for America: I was like, this [treatment] is so unfair” (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008). Molly's affinity identity mediated her discourse in the teacher study group (Gee, 2000) as a TFA alumna. Gee (2000) described affinity identity as sharing an allegiance to “a set of common endeavors or practices” (p. 105). The affinity perspective understands that commitment to a social group is integral to identity and focuses on “distinctive social practices that create and sustain group affiliations” (Gee, 2000, p. 105). TFA is an affinity group in which members share an interest in education, the mission of eliminating

educational inequities through work in high-needs schools, and the discourse and language specific to the organization.

Founded in 1989, TFA revolves around this motto: “One day, all children will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education” (Kopp, 2003). TFA utilizes *core values* to guide the teachers in the organization’s shared mission: “relentless pursuit of results,” “sense of possibility,” “disciplined thought,” “respect and humility,” and “integrity” (Teach For America, 2009a, ¶ 2-6). Molly reflected on her two years in TFA and the result of the experience on her current identity as a teacher.

That’s [TFA] what created my drive and the indoctrination, I guess you would call it, of student achievement and relentless pursuit of results and believing – and honestly believing – in the expectations that you set for these kids is what they will live up to drives everything. Because when I sat for the very first time in Teach for America and I learned about the core values, I said, “This is why I’m in Teach for America. Because that is what I believe, and I think it’s just driven everything about me.” (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Her time in TFA shaped Molly’s affinity identity. The “indoctrination” of organizational ideals became essential to her self-identification as a particular kind of person (Gee, 2000). As an affinity group purposefully created by an organization (Gee, 2000), TFA created core values and instructional practices to construct a bond between TFA teachers and maintain their allegiance to organizational values and practices. Although conscious of TFA’s

“indoctrination,” the affinity identity played an integral role in Molly’s strong affiliation with TFA, even after her two-year commitment to the organization.

Beside the association with the mission and values of the affinity group, TFA’s professional preparation also mediated Molly’s discourse in the teacher study group. The TFA curriculum is based on the *Teaching As Leadership* framework, which calls for teachers to utilize the following steps to instruction: (a) “set an ambitious vision of students’ academic success” (i.e., big goals), (b) “invest students and their families in working hard toward the vision,” (c) “plan purposefully to meet ambitious academic goals,” (d) “execute those plans thoroughly and effectively,” (e) “work relentlessly to meet high academic goals for students,” and (f) “continuously reflect and improve on leadership and effectiveness” (Teach For America, 2009b, ¶ 2-7). The specific terminology from her TFA preparation frequently mediated Molly’s discourse in the teacher study group.

The second study group meeting convened in Marcy’s classroom. The initial *open share* segment of the session led to a discussion about students’ investment in the ELD classroom. The teachers disclosed that students realized the lack of math, social studies, and science instruction when engaged in ELD language-based activities and instruction. Erica described a situation in which her students became frustrated with the overabundance of vocabulary lessons and the lack of content-area instruction.

*Amy:* Erica, back to something you said about the kids saying, like, “*Again* [we have to do vocabulary]?” Do they know the reason behind why we have to do so much of this and that [ELD components that omit broader content areas]?



*Erica:* I haven't really told them anything like that, I'm just like, "There's more things we have to learn," is all I said. And, "You're going to see some words are going to be different." So, I told them, "You won't see science, but it will be vocabulary." So, I'm trying to tell them that [they will only be exposed to language-based instruction], but I haven't gone into depth with anything. It's just, "There are things you're gonna learn a little bit different." That's it.

*Amy: (to others in session)* What about you guys?

*Molly:* I did. I told them.

*Amy:* How did you tell them?

*Molly:* We have the English [language proficiency] big goal. So, we have a writing big goal, a reading big goal, a math big goal, and then we have an English big goal. And so, that English big goal was, "What is this, why do we have an English big goal?" And I told them [students] that, like, "Well the goal is for you to become a proficient English speaker, and so, we're tracking their [your] progress, along those levels as we go just like we would with any other big goal." And they said, "Why do we have this big goal?" Because we went into the whole investment of why it's important, that we, you know, speak English and we become proficient, and they all want to and the parents are really invested behind that because they want their students to pick up proficiency in it [English].

*Amy:* I think it's important for them to know why [the instructional focus is on English].

*Molly:* They really like it [the English big goal]; then the conversation came up again, [and] a student was moved out [of the ELD classroom] because they were proficient in English, so that became a conversation in community circle, "Why was Pablo moved out of class?" [I answered,] "Well, Pablo was moved out of class because he doesn't need the English big goal because he's proficient in English."  
(Study Group 2, September 4, 2008)

The strong emphasis on the "student and parent investment" in the "big goal" reflected the TFA discourse that placed "ambitious academic goals" (Teach for America, 2009b, ¶ 2) at the cornerstone of all instruction. Besides the organizational vocabulary specific to TFA, Molly also utilized the pronoun "we" when referring to her students' goals, emphasizing the shared commitment and classroom community focus integral to Molly's instruction – integral to the "student and family investment" facet of TFA preparation (Teach For America, 2009b, ¶ 3). Although all teachers focused on the assessment-based cultural model of learning in the teacher study group, Molly also frequently utilized discourse that suggested community-based learning.

*Discourse identity: Molly as a social activist.* Whereas her TFA affinity identify mediated Molly's discourse, the individual trait of social activism also shaped her participation in the teacher study group and her resistance to dominant cultural models in the figured world of ELD teaching. Gee (2000) described, "The 'kind of person' one is recognized as 'being,' at a

given time and place, can change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context, and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable” (p. 99). This dynamic approach to the analysis of identity signals the variety of situated identities that can shape teachers’ discourse. The discursive perspective considers identity as tied to an individual trait that originates from discourse with others. In Molly’s case, her discourse identity was social activism – grounded in her political and ideological awareness.

Molly’s discourse reflected the discursive identity of social activism through two types of linguistic cues (Fairclough, 2003) – negative evaluation (e.g., statement of one’s values) and level of commitment (e.g., how committed one is to an issue). When describing her reaction to the language policies that required ELD instruction, Molly stated:

It’s [language policy] racism. Blatant racism. There’s no other way to describe it. It’s against the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment [of the U.S. Constitution]. It’s made specifically to isolate children who are immigrants to this country. And that’s what it is, because if you’re an immigrant, you’re coming in this [ELD] class. And to say that there’s no time to teach them science and social studies is against the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution. It is segregation at its finest, because you are not providing the same educational opportunities for the kids in that [ELD] class that you are providing to native English speakers.

(Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Molly poignantly used vocabulary such as “blatant racism” and “segregation” to make negative evaluative statements (Fairclough, 2003) about the ELD language mandates. Her discourse was politically grounded, as the value statements were understood in the policy-

driven context of Arizona language instruction. Molly demonstrated her political clarity, which occurs when a teacher understands the political realities that shape her life and the lives of her students. Further, political clarity takes place when “individuals come to understand better the possible linkages between macro-level political, economic, and social variables, and subordinated groups’ academic performance at the micro-level classroom” (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001, p. 48). Molly’s knowledge of the constitutional amendments (e.g., the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment that banished racial segregation in the U.S.) and the explicit link made between politics and ELLs confirmed her political clarity (Bartolomé, 2002; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001).

Molly went on to describe her response to the segregation of children and the ELD instruction devoid of academic content. Other teachers in the study group demonstrated knowledge of the social inequities and challenges faced by ELLs, and their discourse reflected social awareness. Without the sense of urgency to take action for social change, teachers “hoped” events would occur to improve the situation for students.

*Cristy:* I’m hoping it [deportation] will settle down. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Andrea:* I hope [U.S. President-elect Barack] Obama makes some changes. I hope both with education and the immigration issue. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008).

Molly’s level of commitment (Fairclough, 2003) appeared to be stronger than other teachers’ commitment in the study group. Her discourse reflected an active position –

reflecting the obligation to go beyond social awareness to social activism. Similar to “creative insubordination” (Ayers, 2005, p. 141) that encourages teachers to resist dominant forces in education, Molly defined her activism as “silent defiance,” giving her students the best possible instruction without calling attention to her classroom.

The only power I feel like I have to be is to be silently defiant. That’s the only activism I feel like I can do: [It] is to say, “Fuck this ....” I don’t care what anybody tells me to do. Then if you fire me, fine. You fire me for doing what I know is best for my kids. And that’s the activism I feel like I have.

(Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

Molly’s discourse throughout the study demonstrated her cognizance, or ideological clarity, of the dominant cultural models in the figured world of ELD teaching. *Ideological clarity* occurs when “individuals struggle to identify both the dominant society’s explanations for the existing societal socio-economic and political hierarchy as well as their own explanation of the social order and any resulting inequalities” (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001, p. 48). Molly’s situated identity as a social activist allowed her to recognize – and therefore reject – certain dominant cultural models, specifically those who perceived ELLs at a deficit and relegated them to skill-based instruction.

At the heart of Molly’s “silent defiance” was the incorporation of the pedagogy that she knew was good for her students, including student-centered workshops, inquiry-based science, and social-justice literature studies. Despite the skill-based, language-only ELD mandates, Molly maintained her commitment to provide students with meaningful instruction. Her social activism guided her resistance to the dominant cultural models that

comprised the figured world of ELD teaching, which led her to continue authentic instruction for ELLs in the classroom. Molly often provided insight on learner- and community-centered practice in our teacher study group sessions, which mediated the discourse of other participants in the teacher study group.

In the first study group session, although other teachers focused on the logistics of the ELD mandates (e.g., scheduling the ELD components, writing state-appropriate lesson plans), Molly pushed the conversation beyond state mandates. To start the conversation on meaningful instruction in the ELD classroom, she dominated the brainstorming of good pedagogical practices with the suggestions of choice-based workshops, inquiry-based learning, use of empowering literature, and readers' and writers' workshop (Study Group 1, August 19, 2008). Besides listing her meaningful approaches to instruction, she utilized her ideas to change the trajectory of the conversation among frustrated ELD teachers in the study group session.

*Gisela:* I go home, and I'm like, "I'm the worst teacher in the world. How am I gonna make all these kids read? How am I going to get them to write a paragraph?" When I have to sit there and, like [state to the ELL student], "Okay, so, tell me a memory." And he's like, "Memory?" And I'm like, "Yeah a memory, something good that happened." You know, I'm trying to pull it out of him and even then, I still have to write it for him. You know, how am I gonna get him to write a paragraph?

*Joni:* Gisela, what grade are you teaching?

*Gisela:* I'm fourth grade this year. Yeah, and I have the ELD, well obviously.

And just, you know, I have the majority of my class – they still need help with phonics. They can't read. They're in first-grade-reader level.

*Molly:* Mine too. The readers' workshop model has been really effective for that because then I'm able to pull [students into] small groups and literally, the entire afternoon from after lunch until they switch for math is pretty much small groups, and it's just structuring that time.

(Study Group 1, August 19, 2008)

Gisela struggled with reaching the ELLs in her classroom; her discourse reflected this frustration through the use of deficit-based perspectives of students (e.g., “They can't read”). Molly interjected by first relating to Gisela and then shifting the discourse to be solution-oriented – offering her student-centered, workshop-based approach to instruction to meet the needs of all students. Similar to instances in subsequent study group sessions, Molly's discourse mediated the dialogue away from the deficit-based emphasis to allow teachers to discuss how to integrate readers' workshop into the daily schedule.

Molly's asset-based thinking and sound pedagogical ideas supported teacher learning throughout the teacher study group sessions. Even in sessions where Molly was not present, other teachers would attribute their learning to ideas interjected by Molly at prior meetings. At the fifth teacher study group in November, Molly had taken a sick day. As the group discussed the benefits in designing instruction based on student interest, Gisela reported a change in her classroom instruction – moving away from sole reliance on skill-based language exercises to include more authentic, meaningful learning experiences.

*Gisela:* Molly was talking one time, she said something about, she uses a lot of, I don't know what word [term] she used, but things that are going to apply to them [ELLs].

*Amy:* "Authentic."

*Gisela:* Yeah, "authentic instruction," and ever since then I've been, even with facts and opinions, "Okay you guys are going to write facts about school. You guys are going to write facts about sports. You guys are going to write facts about animals. You guys are going to write facts about cartoons."

*Andrea:* Soccer.

*Gisela:* Or something like that. And they did it! I try to stay away from like, when I'm looking at the worksheets or things when I want them to practice, it takes more time, but sometimes I have to re-write them like myself, so that way it has more meaning to them. (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

At the first study group session in August, Molly shared her "essential language units" where students learned English vocabulary and grammar through experiential learning (e.g., learning through a "grocery store" unit, then actually going to the grocery store). Three months later, Gisela attributed her own change in classroom practice to Molly's ideas for authentic ELD instruction.

*The social activist in the figured world of English language development teaching.* Molly's situated identity of the social activist set her apart from White, mainstream teachers assumed by



other research to be ill-prepared to teach ELLs. In a review of the teacher preparation research, Hollins and Torres-Guzmán (2005) summarized the recent studies on teachers entering the field of education.

Teacher candidates are a homogeneous population, the large majority of who [sic] are White and middle-class, female, from suburban or rural backgrounds, and with limited experiences with those from backgrounds different from their own. Many of these candidates seem to enter teacher preparation programs with negative or deficit attitudes and beliefs about those different from themselves. (p. 511)

Molly is part of the homogenous population of teachers, characterized by a number of the above variables (e.g., White, middle-class, female, rural background). Nevertheless, the situated identity of the social activist placed Molly as a counterexample to the typical, deficit-based, ill-prepared White teacher described in past research. Her prior experiences shaped how she identified with the figured world and demonstrated her agency to reject dominant cultural models. Molly's social activism can be attributed to a number of historically, culturally, and socially grounded events in her life: her childhood predicated by poverty, her own educational struggles, various experiences with people from diverse backgrounds (e.g., travels in China, teaching predominantly Latino students), and her affiliation with TFA. The compilation of Molly's past experiences with her present reality deepened the political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2002; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001) that informed her social activism.

Molly's affiliation with TFA played a role in Molly's situated identity of the social activist; however, TFA as an organization is a point of contention in the education community. As an alternative path to teacher certification, TFA places teachers typically from non-education backgrounds in high-needs schools after a five-week initial training. As traditional routes to certification require two- to four-year preparation, the alternative and traditional tracts are ideologically at odds. Studies derived from private research organizations (e.g., Credo, Mathematica) demonstrated the success of TFA teachers with raising students' achievement levels in low-income schools (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004; Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001). Nevertheless, studies conducted by university teacher education faculty members investigated the drawbacks of TFA teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002), such as the lack of extensive teacher preparation, the limited two-year commitment, and the inability to achieve academic gains as compared to veteran teachers from formal preparation programs.

My findings do not seek to confirm or deny the conflicting research on the efficacy of TFA as an alternative path to certification; however, I demonstrate above how the figured world of TFA helped to shape Molly's situated identity of a social activist. Similar to the analysis of Mexican-American educators' adopting the Chicano activist identity (Urrieta, 2007), this section outlines a White female educator's situated identity of a social activist. In Urrieta's study, he conceptualized the activist identity as originating at colleges and universities where "participants participated in the activities around the ideals of the broader Chicano activist figured world" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 123). Many of the participants in Urrieta's

study attributed their activist identity to participation in the figured world of Chicano activism. Nevertheless, other educators found the Chicano mantra to be too militant and did not take on the Chicano identity as strong as others, demonstrating the non-sequential, non-prescriptive nature of identity production in figured worlds.

Individual participants in the figured world of TFA, similar to the figured world of Chicano activism, situate their identities in distinct ways. The mission, core values, and professional preparation make up the figured world of TFA that the alternatively-certified teachers use to make sense of their daily practice in low-income classrooms. Some teachers, such as Molly, identified more than others with the figured world and took on the corresponding affinity identity. Other teachers that entered the teaching profession through the same path, such as Andrea in this study, did not identify as strongly with the figured world of TFA to allow for the affinity identity to remain beyond the two-year commitment to the organization.

Molly's affinity and discourse identities both led her to socially situate herself as a social activist. Her experiences and self-proclaimed "indoctrination" in TFA led her to hold asset-based cultural models of students, therefore resisting the dominant cultural models that focused on the deficits of ELLs. Molly's discourse identity, shaped by her own prior experiences with educational inequity, led her to further situate herself as a *social activist* as a trait that defined her being.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter portrayed the situated identities that mediated teachers' discourse on ELLs. The figured world of ELD teaching provided teachers with a realm of interpretation –

made up of dominant cultural models supported by institutional structures and societal forces – to make meaning of daily life at Maravilla School. Nevertheless, the dominant cultural models only provided a framework for teachers to *figure* the world; therefore, teachers identified in various ways with the figured world and had the agency to resist and negotiate the dominant societal and institutional discourse. Teachers' situated identities signaled the various degrees of identification with the figured world of ELD teaching and the individual teachers' competing cultural models. The teachers' socially situated identities – instructional coach, new teacher, social activist, and more – mediated the discourse on ELLs in the Maravilla teacher study group. This chapter scrutinized the individual teachers' situated identities that mediated the discourse of the teacher study group. In the next chapter, I examine the teachers' transforming discourses and cultural models to demonstrate the social construction of knowledge and determine the changes in talk that occurred in the small-group context.

## CHAPTER 6

### Shifting Discourses and Cultural Models: Teacher Learning in Social Interaction

In this chapter, I answer the final research question that guided this study: *How do teachers' discourses and cultural models on language, learning, and ELLs change when introduced to new tools and ideas in a small group?* Teachers utilized dominant cultural models – supported by institutional structures inherent in English-only language policies – to simplify and interpret the complexities of the ELD classroom. The dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs gave shape to the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School, which provided the backdrop for teachers to figure the meaning of characters, acts, and events in everyday life. Teachers identified with and participated in the figured world in distinct ways based on varying situated identities; as individuals with agency, teachers had the capacity to accept or reject dominant cultural models. Whereas Chapter 5 explored how individuals' situated identities mediated discourse in the teacher study group, this chapter describes the social interaction and co-construction of meaning in the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School.

Figured worlds provide “ways of being, knowing, and thinking about particular issues and groups of people” and “are often accepted and unquestioned as they circulate across communities” (Compton-Lilly, 2007, p. 15). Nevertheless, when people refute or question dominant cultural models, the figured world is re-conceptualized and re-formed.

The production and reproduction of figured worlds involves both abstraction of significant regularities from everyday life into expectations about how particular types of events unfold and interpretation of the everyday according to these distillations of past experiences. A figured world

is formed and re-formed in relation to the everyday activities and events that ordain happenings within it. (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 53)

To examine teacher learning, I sought to understand the “continuing adjustment, reorganization, and movement” (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 45) of the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School demonstrated by teachers’ change in talk in the study group. For the purposes of this study, I conceptualize learning as change in teachers’ talk, which suggests the opportunity and possibility for future changes in action (Argyris, 1993). In this chapter, I look at the *trajectories of development* (Little, 2002, p. 936) to trace the changes in representations of practice, orientation to practice, and norms of interaction over time in the teacher study group. The three facets of the conceptual scheme allowed me to “unpack the relations among teacher community, teacher development, and the improvement of practice” (Little, 2002, p. 934).

In this chapter, I explore teacher learning in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. The sections of this chapter describe three perspectives on teacher learning: (a) Teacher Learning in Study Group Sessions, (b) Teacher Learning Across Study Group Sessions, and (c) Teachers’ Reflections on Learning. I begin each section by grounding the data in the theoretical tenets of the sociocultural perspective on teacher learning. I then share and analyze the data to demonstrate how teachers co-constructed knowledge in the social context of the teacher study group. I close with discussion of the data to further explore the complexities of teacher learning in this study.

*Teacher Learning in Study Group Sessions: Tools as Mediators of Knowledge*

Teacher learning in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group transpired within single study group sessions. Through the introduction of specific tools to mediate knowledge, teachers' talk changed. Sociocultural theory frames teacher learning as a "joint, mediated, meaning-making activity" (Cole & Engeström, 1993, p. 22); therefore, learning takes place through social activity and is mediated by cultural artifacts, or tools (Cole, 1990; Cole & Engeström, 1993). Enforced by prototypical practice within the educational institution, teachers regularly utilize tools, such as curriculum guides, state standards, and standardized tests, to organize knowledge of educational practices.

In the teacher study group sessions, I purposively introduced tools to mediate teachers' discourse on cultural models previously reflected in the data. Through the incorporation of tools, I aimed to give teachers new ways to articulate their beliefs and ideas about language, learning, and ELLs. This section includes a specific examination of the two genres of tools I utilized to mediate teacher learning in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group: (a) Mediation of teacher learning with culturally relevant poetry and (b) Mediation of teacher learning with scholarly literature. Each section describes the particular tool, outlines the purpose for introducing the tool, and analyzes data that demonstrates how the tool mediated teacher learning.

*Mediation of teacher learning with culturally relevant poetry.* I frequently incorporated culturally relevant poetry (e.g., poems written by and for Latinos) to stimulate conversation and allow teachers to take new perspectives on the realities and complexities of ELLs. In this section, I describe how the introduction of the following poem, "¿Por Qué Soy Tonto?"

(Why Am I Dumb?)” (Medina, 1999), mediated teachers’ discourse on the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs in the first teacher study group.

¿POR QUÉ SOY TONTO?

*Por qué soy tonto?  
en mi país  
yo era listo.  
Puros dieces!  
Jamás un ocho!*

*Ahora estoy aquí.  
Me dan  
Ces or Des o Efes  
- como cinco  
o cuatros...  
o unos.  
siento que  
estoy volviéndome Kiko  
de mi otra clase.  
Kiko es tonto  
en cualquier país.*

*Bueno,  
todavía soy listo  
en las matemáticas.  
Quizás tonto  
en la lectura.  
Pero en las matemáticas –  
- puros dieces,  
o sea,  
puros Aes.*

WHY AM I DUMB?

*Why am I dumb?  
In my country  
I was smart.  
All tens!  
Never even an eight!*

*Now I’m here.  
They give me  
Cs or Ds or Fs  
– like fives  
or fours...  
or ones.  
I feel like  
I’m turning into Kiko  
from my old class.  
Kiko’s dumb  
in any country.*

*Well,  
I’m still smart  
In math.  
Maybe dumb  
In reading.  
But math –  
– all tens,  
I mean,  
As.*

-- Jane Medina, *My Name is Jorge on Both Sides of the River*

The data from my initial interviews with study group participants displayed teachers’ deficit-based viewpoints of ELLs. As teachers began to settle into the ELD classrooms early in the semester, they described first impressions of the ELLs in their classrooms for the 2008 – 2009 school year.

*Andrea:* They’re all just clueless. (Initial Interview, August 4, 2008)



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*Erica:* They're a lot lower, a lot lower [than non-ELL students]. (Initial Interview, August 11, 2008)

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*Mary:* They don't have the vocabulary (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

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*Gisela:* They are so low .... They don't understand. (Initial Interview, August 13, 2008)

The teachers described ELLs as “lower,” “clueless,” and unable to do many of the academic skills expected at a particular grade level compared to non-ELL students of the same academic grade. Besides teachers’ deficit perspectives, Molly revealed that students were also exposed to the notion that they were deficient in some way:

One time somebody [in another class] said that we were the dumb class. And they [students] brought it up in community circle that another class had called us “the dumb class.” I was like, “We’re here because we have our own goals.” (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

Whether from a teacher’s or student’s perspective, the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs was evident from the initial interviews – a taken-for-granted, simplified assumption that I wanted to bring out in the study group setting.

While planning the first study group session, I chose to introduce the poem “¿Por Qué Soy Tonto? (Why am I dumb?)” by Jane Medina (1999) to encourage teachers to probe the assumed linguistic and academic deficiencies of ELLs. On an early Tuesday morning in

August, just a few weeks into the new school year, participants gathered for the first study group session in Molly's classroom – finding places to sit around the cluster of students' desks and enjoying coffee and bagels. The teachers began to informally share the challenges, frustrations, and questions faced in the ELD classroom. To begin the formal discussion of the study group, I called teachers' attention to the poem that accompanied the session agenda in their binders and asked for a volunteer to read aloud to the group.

*Gisela:* (reads English version of “¿Por Qué Soy Tonto? (Why Am I Dumb?)”)

*Joni:* Nice job. Nice.

*Amy:* Yes, thanks for reading, Gisela. So, why do you think we started with that poem to start our study group meetings on the [topic of] ELD?

*Andrea:* I guess to me, I just realized that our students aren't slow or dumb or it's not an intelligence issue – that a lot of them are very smart in Spanish, but maybe just not in English.

*Joni:* It's [academic struggles] a cultural issue.

*Andrea:* Yeah, and there's a difference [between countries]. Mexico does the grading on 1 through 10. I remember my husband telling me when he grew up [attending school in Mexico] when he got grades. I was like, “Oh, what were your grades?” And he was like, “Eights and nines.” And I'm like, “What is that?” So, I was like, “Now I know what they're talking about there.” Yeah, for our students it's a whole different transition to As and Bs and Cs – the whole grading scale. It's just one of the differences.

*Mary:* And English is hard. It's not – it's not easy. Even to teach it, some of the concepts are like, "The structure is just this way because it is." It's hard to tell a second grader that you're supposed to put this word in front of the other word [merely as a result of convention]. It's just hard.

*Erica:* And I also think that math is usually the one [subject] that they [ELLs] could do better in, or that they can relate more, because numbers are numbers and [non-linguistic] concepts, you know? Because I see that in my class, too. Math they tend to like, [saying,] "Okay, let's go."

*Joni:* Yeah.

*Andrea:* Yeah. (*laughs*)

*Erica:* But you get to reading, it's like, "Oh, my gosh."

*Joni:* "Teacher, this [math] is easy, this is easy."

*Amy:* Because they [students] feel successful at math.

*Erica:* Uh huh.

*Molly:* They do [feel successful at math]. (Study Group 1, August 19, 2008)

The introduction of the poem, told from the point-of-view of an ELL named Jorge, allowed teachers to probe the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs from the perspective of a student. Compared to the initial interview data, the teachers' discourse revealed that some shifts in perception were beginning to take place. Andrea, who referred to her students as "clueless" in her first interview later realized that "a lot of them are very smart in Spanish." Nancy, who stated that ELLs "don't have the language" later recognized that "English is

hard.” Erica, who originally defined her students as “a lot lower” than mainstream students, appreciated that mathematics came easy to many ELLs in her classroom. The introduction of the tool opened up an opportunity for teacher learning and mediated the group interaction. The linguistic cues in teachers’ discourse mirrored the content of the poem – the distinction between grading systems (e.g., *As* versus *10s*), struggles with reading in English, and successes with mathematics. The brief dialogue demonstrated the teachers’ examination of the deficit-based cultural model of ELLs.

Beyond inciting conversation and exploration of cultural models in the first study group, the introduction of the culturally relevant poem also directly affected one teacher’s classroom practice. At the start of the second teacher study group meeting, Molly described how she recently devised a new approach to literacy instruction in her ELD classroom. Cristy, the instructional coach, asserted the need for teachers to be familiar with the ELP standards to plan listening and speaking lessons, so Molly interjected her incorporation of poetry journals.

*Molly:* [We do] poetry everyday for 15 minutes. In that time, [we are] getting in all those content reading standards – rhyme scheme, stanza, fluency.

*Cristy:* And you put [that lesson in] your listening and speaking time?

*Molly:* Listening and speaking time – and poetry journals.

*Amy:* I love it. That’s great.

*Molly:* And on Friday is the *slam*.

*Amy:* Oh, a poetry slam. That’s awesome.

*Cristy*: I don't know what that is.

*Molly*: That's when they [students] get a chance to sort of re-enact the poem in a way that they want to. And we're getting a big spotlight.

*Amy*: That would be great to invite parents into something like that.

*Molly*: I know. That's what the kids keep saying.

As described in Chapter 5, Molly frequently contributed tangible, pedagogical ideas at the teacher study group sessions. In this case, she shared a practical idea for integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the use of poetry journals and slams.

I realized later in a conversation with Molly that her incorporation of poetry in ELD classroom instruction came directly from the use of the culturally relevant poem in the first study group session. Minutes after the exchange above, I introduced another poem (Alarcón, 2005) to begin the second study group conversation.

*Amy*: If you turn the page after the agenda, this one [poem] is from *Poems to Dream Together* [Alarcón, 2005]. Another one of my favorite ones [poetry books], and it is also by a Latino author, so if anyone wants to look at that [book].

*Molly*: I went and got that [other] book. They [students] loved that.

*Amy*: The *My Name is Jorge* book? You went and got?

*Molly*: Yeah, we put it in our poetry journal.

*Amy*: How great are those poems? These [Alarcón poems] are good too, but [with] *My Name is Jorge*, they can connect so much with.

*Molly*: Yeah, they beg to read more.

*Amy:* Good. That's why I like to bring these things [mediating tools] in, because not only is it a good way to start our conversation, they're great things you can use with your students to start them [in conversation] too. (Study Group 2, September 4, 2008)

Following the first teacher study group session, Molly had purchased the book that was used as a tool to mediate our dialogue. The poetry book *My Name is Jorge on Both Sides of the River* (Medina, 1999) is comprised of 37 poems from the point-of-view of Jorge, a young immigrant from Mexico newly enrolled in a U.S. public, elementary school. Jorge describes the challenges and struggles that many ELLs can relate to, including learning a new language, making friends, and taking school tests. After being introduced to the text as a mediating artifact for the first study group conversation, Molly made the connection with her classroom practice and carried the use of culturally relevant poetry over to engage her students in literacy, a sound pedagogical practice for teaching literacy to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Ada, 2003; Au, 1993; Bishop, 1992; Medina & Enciso, 2002).

*Mediation of teacher learning with scholarly literature.* In addition to culturally relevant poetry, I incorporated scholarly literature grounded in educational research (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters) to offer teachers other ways of articulating beliefs and ideas about ELLs. In this section, I describe how the use of one article, "I am a Level 3 Reader" (Pierce, 1999), mediated teachers' discourse on the assessment-centered cultural model of learning in the fifth teacher study group.

As described in Chapter 4, teachers' discourse consistently reflected the assessment-centered cultural model of learning – demonstrating the assumption that students literally

were the numeric score received on the AZELLA. The English-only language policies that staunchly relied on the AZELLA for segregating ELLs from English-speaking peers supported and strengthened the assessment-centered cultural model of learning. Due to the frequent objectification of ELLs as a number, I distinctively selected a scholarly article to probe and demystify teachers' use of numeric labels to describe students and their abilities. In the article, Pierce (1999) explored how the ascription of a *reading level* (e.g., Level 3 in a leveled-reading series) to a student limited teachers' expectations and students' growth. Due to similarities in the use of numeric labels to define both *reading level* and *language proficiency*, I introduced the article as a tool to mediate teacher learning.

Before I shifted the study group conversation to concentrate on defining and describing ELLs, the teachers utilized the *open share* portion of the session to dialogue about current challenges in the ELD classroom. Joni initiated the discussion on the lack of time to meet the four-hour ELD mandates and maintain alignment to the grade-level reading curriculum:

Yesterday, I finally taught a reading comprehension lesson, but we didn't actually get to the anthology. I taught the lesson, but then we didn't apply it [reading comprehension skill] in the anthology, because I needed to get to reading groups. And I didn't apply it in reading groups because I'm behind in my leveled reading. (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

Joni's assertion generated discussion that emphasized the lack of time to include the reading curriculum anthology due to the difference in students' abilities between mainstream and ELD classrooms. Other teachers shared the sentiment of the challenge to incorporate the

reading curriculum while also remaining in compliance with the four-hour ELD mandates.

Gisela and Andrea also asserted that the difficulty of the anthology deterred from the plausibility for use in classroom instruction.

*Gisela:* I skip the anthology story – hardly ever do we get to the anthology story. And Samantha’s [mainstream teacher] like, “It’s still really good for them [students] to get grade-level stories, and the stories are great.” [I thought in response,] Yeah, that’s great, but they can’t read them...

*Andrea:* It [anthology story recording] goes too fast for them [students]. I don’t know about you guys, but my entire class, the highest AR [Accelerated Reading] level in my class [of approximately 30 students] is a 3.0, and that’s two students. Everybody else is in the 1.0s and the 2.0s [scoring range]. So, my kids all read at a first- and second-grade level. So, of course they can’t read that [anthology].... It’s just too fast for them. It’s not even that fast, but just [too fast for] the rate that they [students] read. There’s giant words in there, [when] in fifth grade, they’re reading at a first-and-a half-grade reading level. (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

Teachers’ frustrations during the open share segment centered around the challenge to incorporate the school-required literacy curriculum while also meeting the instructional needs of students, who were described as being below the reading level of the curriculum materials. I used Andrea’s reference to a student at a “first-and-a-half-grade reading level”



(i.e., student scored a 1.5 on Accelerated Reader) to transition into the formal inquiry portion of the teacher study group session, mediated by the use of scholarly literature. To remind teachers of the mediating artifact they had read in preparation for the study group, I dictated a quote from the article “I am a Level 3 Reader” (Pierce, 1999):

*Amy: (reads from the article)* “I have grown increasingly concerned that as adults we are focusing so much on the children’s reading levels that we are ignoring and possibly devaluing other ways of defining or describing them as readers” [Pierce, 1999, p. 360]. So, think about that, as far as, not as reading levels, but *language* levels. Think about that and how we define our students. (*pauses*) What do you think about that?

*Mary:* I think it has to do with reading levels though too, because I was yelling down the hall about AR [Accelerated Reader]. And I was saying my kids did really well on AR ... and the sub[stitute teacher] across the hallway was like, “You must have the high group.” And I was like, “Oh, well, I mean, they work hard” .... I don’t have the highest group. I don’t have the C.A.P. [Challenging Academic Potential (i.e., gifted)] students. I mean, they’re still ELD ....

*Amy:* ... That’s [using labels] become so engrained in what we [teachers] do that it becomes part of our dialogue .... Any other thoughts?

*Andrea:* It makes me think about how much we take away from our kids’ having their own personalities and interests, and specifically with the *interest* part. A lot of research supports the fact that students do well

when they're interested in something. It's common sense, too. I've seen my kids that are 1.3 reading levels buy the books from the book order that are definitely not 1.3 reading levels, in the fourth grade Scholastic book order form. My little José comes up to me the other day and he's got a chapter book, but it's on Kung Fu Panda, and he's like, "Miss Luna, I'm halfway done." And he was so excited, and I was like (*skeptical tone*), "Really? You're halfway done with that? Tell me about it." And he proceeded to tell me everything that happened in the story! And it wasn't just a replay of the movie! It was some extension, *Kung Fu Panda Goes to the Forest*.

*All: (laughing)*

*Andrea:* So, he told me, "Then he did this and this, and it was really scary because this happened." And I'm going, "Oh, my gosh!" And that was like a third-, fourth-grade reading level book. So, it just makes me think: Sometimes when we label them [students] with those levels, we forget that when kids are interested, they can actually do more. Maybe that's what they're doing [demonstrating poor performance] on the test or the assessment that we give them, because they may not be so into it, but if we give them something that they're really into, they can usually achieve more than that. So, it's [the article] kind of made me think. (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

After I initiated the conversation with a question to incite teachers' thoughts on the article, Marcy and Andrea connected with representations of classroom practice – recalling prior experiences in the ELD classroom where the phenomenon of numerical labels provoked assumptions or limited expectations of students. The article mediated Andrea's representation of the experience with José, as she made the practical realization that consideration of only his reading level limited her expectations of his reading abilities (Castell & Luke, 1988; Pierce, 1999; Taberski, 2000). In comparison to her earlier discourse (i.e., her students at a “first-and-a-half-grade reading level” could not access grade-level reading curriculum), I discovered her change in participation in the teacher study group session as a result of (a) the mediation of the scholarly article and (b) the co-construction of knowledge through social interaction. Andrea's connection to her experience with José led her to question the role of assessment (i.e., “Maybe that's what they're doing on the test or the assessment that we give them, because they may not be so into it”). The scholarly literature mediated Andrea's transparent representation of classroom practice, which resulted in the interruption of the assessment-based cultural model of learning.

The scholarly article also prompted teachers to build connections (Gee & Greene, 1998) to research-based ideas learned from experiences outside of the teacher study group. After Andrea had referenced external educational research in her discourse (e.g., “Research supports the fact that students do well when they're interested in something”), Joni built on prior dialogue to connect with knowledge from her recent Master's degree program course.

*Joni:* Along that line, I just finished my first class in my Master's [program],

*Reading Foundations* .... A lot was about reading surveys and attitudes

... [such as] *How do kids feel about themselves as readers?* And he [course instructor] was talking about providing access for kids to text that they may not be able to read .... There's so much technology now. I forgot those little, they're not called iPods, but you can actually purchase these little –

*Cristy*: MP3 sets?

*Jon*: I don't know exactly what it is, but it's a whole book. You can get Harry Potter on this. I don't know how practical that is, but some way of letting them access text that's higher than they're able to read so they can enjoy it, and that's what reading is truly about – is enjoying.

*Gisela*: So, that would go back to the anthology and really letting them [students], at least, listen to the stories. ... I always wondered how valuable is this if they're just trying to listen to it and trying to follow along? Whereas, and I know that they really can't [be] one hundred percent, [and] most of them can't read it – some of them can. So, now I know that I should, it's a good thing to at least let them hear it [anthology story] because the kids love the stories.

*Cristy*: I think sometimes if you just set a purpose... if you're working on character traits, [for example:] "What actions does the character do?" Even if they're just listening and not following the words, but they're able to then talk to their partner about it, and then stop after that page.

*Andrea:* I guess that listening comprehension can be above...their reading level. I think we've been expecting them [students] to read the anthology but if we just expect them to listen, then it's totally doable.

*Joni:* Yeah, and it is very important that they can read but they also –

*Cristy:* Need to be exposed.

*Joni:* Need to be exposed.

*Andrea:* Yeah, and get excited about it! (Study Group 5, November 6, 2008)

After Joni made the connection to her Master's class, she contributed a poignant statement about the power of giving students opportunities to access text higher than their reading level: "That's what reading is truly about – is enjoying." Joni's assertion opened up a learning opportunity for Gisela, who connected backward to a prior utterance about the use of the reading curriculum anthology in the ELD classroom. Whereas Gisela had previously discussed the inability to use the anthology with her students due to the difference in reading level, she now realized the power of allowing students to listen to the stories. Cristy built upon Gisela's learning and connected classroom practice through her concrete idea for using the anthology for listening comprehension. At the end of the session, the teachers co-constructed the sound pedagogical notion that reading is more than achieving a leveled-reading score (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002; Taberski, 2000; Wolf, 2004); rather, reading is a meaningful process that students should be exposed to, get excited about, and enjoy.

As demonstrated by the dialogue above, the teachers' discourse changed over the duration of the fifth teacher study group. As they made clear and transparent representations

of classroom practice (Little, 2002) and built connections (Gee & Greene, 1998) to past experiences and prior conversations, they negotiated the cultural model of learning that relied primarily on assessment data. The dialogue of the ELD teachers exhibited teachers' co-construction of meaning – making connections and building on each other's ideas to result in realistic and meaningful solutions to problems presented earlier in the conversation (e.g., anthology stories being inaccessible to students due to text difficulty). The use of the literary tool, "I Am a Level 3 Reader" (Pierce, 1999) mediated teachers' discourse by providing a trajectory for the conversation, giving new ways to articulate ideas about students as readers, and opening up the opportunity for learning.

*Mediation of teacher learning in the Maravilla teacher study group.* Within the sociocultural paradigm, knowledge is socially constructed and mediated by cultural tools, or artifacts. Throughout the seven teacher study group sessions, I regularly incorporated two types of tools – culturally relevant poetry and scholarly literature. Literature is a powerful psychological and cultural tool that mediates human experience and cognitive change (Kozulin, 1996). By introducing teachers to literature in the teacher study group sessions, I aimed to give participants new ways to examine and discuss ideas and beliefs about ELLs. In looking at the teacher learning as mediated by literary tools, I specifically focused on learning as mediated by teachers' responses to readings and considered small events of reading as productive sites for inquiry (Sumara, 2000).

I utilized culturally relevant poetry as a mediating tool in the teacher study group sessions to probe themes related to the diversity of Latinos' experiences in the U.S. (Ada, 2003). As most students at Maravilla School were Latino (i.e., 97% of Maravilla students are

Latino, predominantly from Mexico; 50% of Maravilla students are ELLs), I selected culturally relevant, literary tools from Latino literature, which refers to literature written or illustrated by Latino and Latina authors (Ada, 2003). As many Latino authors write texts based on their own personal experiences and identities, literature provides a first-hand account for teachers to make sense of the realities faced by Latinos in the U.S. Within the larger collection of Latino literature, I specifically utilized individual poems for (a) the sheer factor of time and (b) the power of poetry.

I incorporated scholarly literature as a mediating tool in study groups to recognize participants as intelligent educators with the capacity to fuse theory and practice (Birchak *et al.*, 1998). Utilizing the recommendations for teacher learning communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Darling-Hammond, 1999) and teacher study groups (Birchak *et al.*, 1998), I integrated scholarly literature to support teachers' inquiry into classroom practice. To support the teachers' integral connection between theory and practice, I carefully selected scholarly literature that was (a) applicable to classroom practice and (b) grounded in the topic for our teacher study group conversation.

Beyond giving teachers new ways to scrutinize and verbalize thoughts and beliefs, the mediating tools provided focus and structure to the teacher study group sessions. The meetings that incorporated tools to incite discussion – culturally relevant poetry, scholarly literature, or both – maintained the concentration and productivity of the session. On one occasion, I chose not introduce a mediating tool; I unintentionally scheduled the fourth teacher study group during the week of the projected ADE audit of Maravilla School. When I realized the stress and time constraints placed on teachers during this week, I chose to

leave the session open for two reasons: (a) I did not want to give teachers pre-reading in addition to the lesson planning and preparation for the state visit and (b) I felt teachers may need an open forum to discuss thoughts, fears, and ideas with the looming compliance audit. As teachers primarily off-loaded frustrations and demonstrated little change in discourse on ELLs, the absence of tools exhibited the importance to the mediation of knowledge in teacher study group sessions.

In each study group session, teachers engaged in social interaction around a specific topic related to language, learning, and ELLs. The introduction of cultural tools mediated teachers' discourse – allowing teachers to make connections and represent classroom practice and opening up opportunities for teacher learning. In the next section, I trace the trajectory of development (Little, 2002) revealed in teachers' discourse across the duration of the teacher study group research.

*Teacher Learning across Study Group Sessions: Changes in Discourse and Cultural Models over Time*

Teacher learning in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group also occurred over the duration of the semester-long research – the trajectory of development (Little, 2002) of the teacher learning community. As described in Chapter 2, teachers' changing participation over time evidences learning in the sociocultural paradigm (Rogoff, 2003). Based on the research questions that guided my study, I conceptualized learning as the change in teachers' discourse and cultural models over time. The discursive data from August to December demonstrated teachers' negotiation of dominant cultural models and co-construction of competing cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs.



In Chapters 4 and 5, I presented data that portrayed the discourse and cultural models of the teachers early in the study (e.g., concentration on enacting ELD mandates, referring to students only by AZELLA score). To exhibit the change in teachers' discourse and cultural models over the duration of the study, I present discursive data from the sixth teacher study group session. As I utilized the seventh and final session for teachers to reflect on learning and member check data, the penultimate teacher study group provided the last dialogue guided by a teacher-selected topic (e.g., ELLs and writing). The late-November session held in Marcy's room provided a rich source of data that demonstrated various changes in teachers' discourse and cultural models over the semester.

This section analyzes how teachers' discourse and cultural models changed over time through participation in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. I describe how teachers' discourse and cultural models changed over time with respect to (a) Language and (b) Learning. Each section recapitulates the dominant cultural model, analyzes the co-construction and negotiation of the cultural model, and investigates the complexities of teacher learning based on teachers' change in participation over time.

*Language: "He was writing a lot in Spanish."* As language difference was one characteristic shared by ELLs at Maravilla School, the topic of language came up on occasion in study group dialogue. Supported by the institutional structures of English-only language policy, the dominant cultural models of language reflected in teachers' discourse placed English as the language for school success and marginalized Spanish as inappropriate for school use. Poignant statements, such as "We can speak it [Spanish], but not in the classroom" and "It's really important that you don't speak in Spanish," manifested the

overall sentiment of teachers toward the role of Spanish in school. Nevertheless, teachers' discourse changed over time to expose the negotiation of the dominant cultural models of language – specifically the place of Spanish in classroom instruction.

The teachers sat around a group of students' desks for the penultimate teacher study group, held before school in Marcy's classroom. Reflecting on writing instruction in her classroom, Marcy asserted, "Writing is so hard at such a young age because they're all working on everything all at once" (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008). After Gisela echoed the challenge, both Cristy and Molly empathized that all classrooms had students with varying writing needs and interjected ideas to differentiate writing instruction. Thinking back to my own classroom experience with young ELLs and writing, I inadvertently shifted the dialogue on writing differentiation to specifically hone in on students' native language.

*Amy:* Do they [students] know how to write in Spanish?

*Gisela:* I have two [students] that do. And sometimes they ask me specifically, "Can I write it in Spanish?" And one girl, she's very, very – she's my one [AZELLA score]. And I said, "Sure, go ahead." But she's one of them that's – as much as she can write English, she tries still. There's some things when she really wants to express herself, she asks [to write in Spanish], and I say, "Sure, go ahead."

*Andrea:* What do you do with those ones [AZELLA scores]? I have one [student] whose writing is just a blank page [without words] for her. Should I allow her to write in Spanish? Should I encourage her to do that or no?

*Amy:* In my personal opinion, when we talk about teaching writing, the most important part is showing kids the meaning and the purpose behind it. The main purpose in writing is getting your ideas on paper. It's not about writing in a perfect sentence. It's not about writing with perfect grammar, because that comes later. The main idea is to get kids to get their thoughts out on paper, so, I think so, [permit writing in Spanish] until they're ready to transition in. If they're writing in their native language, they're still practicing getting their ideas on paper. Of course, I would think you'd want to encourage them eventually to transfer over [to writing in English].

*Andrea:* Because, right now, it's blank every time we do writing – blank paper, nothing – unless she copies something off the wall.

*Amy:* That's not helping her at all.

*Mary:* (to *Andrea*) Will she talk to you though?

*Andrea:* Not in English, but in Spanish, oh, yeah. She'll talk to me in Spanish.

(Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

After I initiated the question specific to the use of Spanish in the classroom, the same teachers who had willingly interjected a number of ideas about writing in English went silent. Teachers appeared skeptical to be completely transparent about the integration of Spanish writing, due to Cristy's presence and her institutional identity as the instructional coach. That is, the admission of using Spanish in the classroom would go against the English-only mandates that Cristy was responsible to implement and maintain compliance.

After Angelica posed her question about language use in the classroom (e.g., “Should I allow her to write in Spanish?”), all teachers immediately looked in the direction of Cristy and me – their eyes going back and forth between our adjacent seats while I encouraged the use of Spanish to develop students’ writing.

When the concentration of the conversation returned to Andrea’s student, Cristy voiced her consent to Spanish language use, which opened up the opportunity for teachers to learn about Spanish integration in ELD writing instruction.

*Cristy:* I would encourage her to write in Spanish.

*Gisela:* One of my kids last year, he was writing a lot in Spanish. And I don’t know how the grammar works in Spanish or whatever, but I noticed nothing was capitalized; nothing was [sic], period; so, he was still writing in Spanish. So, I was like, “Okay, well a sentence has to start with a capital and has to end with a period.” That’s how I kind of started it, and then as soon as they got their language and started to feel more comfortable to start writing in English, that’s when it [improvement in writing] would come.

*Molly:* And they [students] do [know Spanish], and the other kids in my class can read Spanish, so their conference partners do the writing process with all these people that can read Spanish. And then they’re assessed on the same rubric, and then they are so excited to translate it [Spanish] over into English.

*Gisela:* And it works because it's like, "Who can read Spanish?" "Me, me, me!" "Okay, can you grade Diana's paper on whatever they're graded on? I don't understand what she's trying to say." And then they would conference because I can't understand to conference with her. So, they would conference and talk about why this sentence even in Spanish doesn't make sense.

*Molly:* I think it's important that once they do acquire the language that they understand the objective and skill that you want them to have mastered. And if they're mastering in Spanish, it'll be a lot easier for them to translate it [writing skill] over to English. (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

In her role as Maravilla instructional coach in charge of English-only language policy implementation and compliance, Cristy's presence signaled to teachers that they should hold back thoughts and ideas on Spanish use in the classroom. After she voiced consent to some Spanish language use (e.g., "I would encourage her to write in Spanish"), Gisela and Molly divulged their utilization of Spanish to improve students' writing in English. Teachers first looked nervously to me to respond to all inquiries related to Spanish use in the classroom, as their integration of Spanish literacy may breach the expectations of the English-only language policies. Nevertheless, Cristy's comment made teachers appear much more at ease with the topic of language choice in the ELD classroom and led them to represent their classroom practice with more transparency. When Cristy deconstructed her identity as the

staunch enforcer of state language policies, the discourse transformed and allowed teachers to respond with more transparency about classroom practice (Little, 2003).

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, teachers' discourse often reflected dominant cultural models of language – emphasizing the importance of English for school success and the value of Spanish as only external to the school setting. Nevertheless, approximately three months following our initial meeting, the teachers negotiated the cultural models of language in the penultimate teacher study group. The teacher study group discourse exhibited identity building (Gee & Greene, 1998), as teachers assembled meaning based on the Cristy's institutional identity of the instructional coach. When Cristy deconstructed her institutional role as the English-only policy enforcer, she opened up the opportunity for teacher learning. Teachers' talk changed to focus on the research-based, meaningful classroom practice of building upon students' first language abilities (Cummins & Krashen, 2007; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002). The shift in discourse revealed a change in the teachers' discourse over time – interrupting the dominant cultural model, in which the use of Spanish in the classroom was a hindrance, and moving to a competing cultural model that valued Spanish for classroom instruction.

*Learning: “She’s making progress.”* Throughout the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, teachers maintained a relatively static cultural model of learning – relying predominantly on AZELLA scores to describe and define ELLs. The assessment-centered cultural model reflected the staunch reliance on the AZELLA to determine a student's instructional fate – four hours of skill-based English language instruction in an ELD classroom or content-based instruction in a mainstream classroom. Nevertheless, the teachers' cultural models of

learning transformed over the duration of the teacher study group – from assessment-centered to learner-centered. In the penultimate teacher study group, there were two noticeable changes in teachers’ discourse that revealed shifts from assessment-centered to learner-centered cultural model of learning: (a) the shift to using students’ names rather than test scores to refer to students and (b) the shift in dialogue from language policy compliance to sound pedagogical practice.

The numerical objectification of students exposed the assessment-based cultural model of learning– using numbers to define and describe students and their abilities. After four months, teachers’ discourse changed to give students a name and face beyond the numerical test score. During the fifth teacher study group session, Andrea represented her classroom practice through a story about “her little José” and his successful reading of *Kung Fu Panda*. The use of the article, “I Am a Level 3 Reader” (Pierce, 1999), led to Andrea’s reference to a student by name rather than by AZELLA score – a rare occurrence up until this point of the teacher study group sessions. Although teachers continued to use numeric labels on occasion, I observe a noticeable change in the final two study groups – a shift away from the use of the AZELLA score to define and describe students.

In the sixth teacher study group, teachers followed Andrea’s lead from the previous teacher study group and began to refer to students by name (e.g., José, Juan, Ana, Federico). Erica disclosed a challenge in her classroom – stating that many of her students had ideas for writing, but lacked the organization to compose a coherent paragraph. Rather than the ascription of the numerical AZELLA score to discuss a student, Erica referred to a student by name, which sparked a discussion among teachers who had previously had Kara in class.

*Erica:* I had a student write a story for this week and her story was pretty decent but the order was off. I had to go back and say, “No, Kara. You lost a tooth. This must have happened first, and then this. You can’t tell me at the end of the story [first].”

*Joni:* Is that Kara Sanchez? Aw, Kara.

*Erica:* She’s making progress though.

*Andrea:* Kara. I remember her in Kindergarten. No English whatsoever on her first day in Marissa’s classroom. She’s like “Blah, blah, blah, blah [non-English speech].” And Marissa’s like, “I don’t know what she’s saying!” (*laughs*) Yeah, I had her all year in after-school club, not one word in English. Is she doing better now?

*Erica:* She’s doing better, but she’s my student who’s [a] one in AZELLA.

And hopefully she won’t be. I think she’s improving a lot.

*Joni:* That’s great that she wrote a story.

*Erica:* I still have to help her put it in sequence.

*Andrea:* I worked with letters and sounds for her all year in kindergarten. By the end she finally had letters and sounds, by the end, like April.

(Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

As teachers moved away from the reliance on static numerical labels, the conversations about students and their abilities became more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Rather than assume academic and linguistic abilities based on AZELLA scores, teachers discussed students as individuals – identification of students by their names,



description of particular abilities and needs, and initiation of dialogue among teachers about specific students.

In addition, teachers discussed classroom instruction grounded in students' needs rather than policy compliance. After the open share segment of the penultimate teacher study group, teachers began with reflection on students as writers, including their perceived instructional needs of ELLs. Learner-centered pedagogy framed the resulting dialogue, signifying a change in teachers' discourse and the typical assessment-centered cultural model of learning. After referencing the weakness of the writing portion of the school's literacy curriculum, Andrea moved the study group conversation to the implementation of meaningful writing activities in the classroom.

*Andrea:* I'm doing a sort of writing workshop with them. ... We're doing lots of poems, and they're making conversation poems, and they're loving it! It's the first time that my kids have ever been excited about actually writing something .... They're learning quotations by having a conversation between two people and I'm letting them have it between wrestlers, Hannah Montana, whoever they want, to put it in the context of whoever they're totally interested in. It's nothing dry from the curriculum, about kids in places they've never been to. They're loving it! So, that seems to be working really well. That's kind of something new we've started a couple weeks ago.

*Amy:* Anybody else have anything that's working really well to share?

*Molly:* I have writing workshop, which is fantastic. So, we have been working

in descriptive vocabulary so we're working on writing scary leads ... we'll read different scary stories, pull out the vocabulary and then we'll put it all together, and then they can go off and write several leads and then they choose a seed. ... Writing is the best part of their day .... They love it! And then it incorporates a lot of reading elements that I'm not able to get to in the reading curriculum because it takes so long to get to mood and things like that.

*Amy:* I think two things from both of your examples. One, it's fun and the kids enjoy it. And it's also authentic; it's meaningful, not just "copy a sentence" or whatever. And it's based on their needs too. They need help on punctuation and do that [conversation poems]. So, I think that's great. (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

Without prompting for specific approaches to teaching writing instruction, Andrea took the reins of the conversation and shared her new approach, which she called *Fun Write*. Her development of this approach to writing instruction (e.g., writing about Hannah Montana, wrestlers, or anything "they're totally interested in") originated from the prior teacher study group, in which she realized students could exceed their assumed ability level when interested in a topic (Pierce, 1999). After Molly contributed other effective writing practices, I framed the conversation with a question to encourage other teachers to share their ideas.

*Amy:* Anything else? Anything that's working?

*Gisela:* I think I need something that's working, so that way, I'm probably

going to talk to you [Molly and Andrea]. And like, “How do you really – what does it really look like?” ... I told them [students], “I just need complete sentences.” So, everything we’re doing in math, science, everything, we’re writing out complete sentences .... Should I be more ahead [of only writing sentences] than that?

*Cristy:* Well, you have to start where they are.

*Amy:* What are the needs of your writers? Then go from there. Look at where they’re at and what’s holding them back.

*Gisela:* I tried a personal narrative thing at the beginning of the year. We all did that in fourth grade, and they couldn’t write complete sentences.

*Andrea:* So, how can they write a story? (Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

Gisela confessed her struggles with writing instruction, particularly her perception that students needed to write in complete sentences before moving on to write longer passages such as personal narratives. After Cristy and Andrea substantiated Gisela’s concern, I sought to return to dialogue that opened up opportunities for teachers to share and learn about meaningful writing instruction.

*Amy:* I think that [writing a personal narrative without complete sentences] is okay, honestly. You can still have them [students] write a personal narrative if it’s not in complete sentences because they still have the ideas to get out.

*Andrea:* You can just work on revision a lot.

*Amy:* I think one thing that works really well, too, is to use children's literature to get them started thinking about things [to write about].

*Molly:* Yes, they love it [the practice of using children's literature].

*Amy:* If you can find a personal narrative in the form of a picture book to read to them to give an example, and then model how you take that idea and make it your own, and write your personal narrative as a shared writing, and then have them go do it. And I think it depends on what your objective [of the lesson] is. I think even if they can still get some ideas down and even have some pictures to go with it. Everything may not be in complete sentences, yet at least they're still getting –

*Gisela:* Yeah, that's what we did .... They drew the pictures and then we went and tried to describe the pictures, and then they just wrote whatever they could and then we went back and revised but that was just a unit. We spent a whole week doing that.

*Amy:* But I think that's great. Spend a whole week doing it. That way you can go through each step of the writing process too.

*Molly:* I still have kids using pictures [to help with writing].

*Andrea:* There's a great book. I'm thinking of literature. *The Spider and the Fly* was one of the first ones [books] that I used to do the conversation poems. It's this awesome, awesome book – fabulous illustrations and everything. It's about a spider talking to a fly and trying to get the fly

to come hang out in his web so he can eat her. And the spider's talking to the fly, and the fly's talking back to the spider. And there's quotation marks. We just talked about that. They loved it.

*Gisela:* So, they're having conversations going back to each other?

*Andrea:* Yeah, they're having conversations, like the spider is like, "Hey, little fly. Come hang out in my web." And it's a black-and-white book. The spider – or the fly – is dressed up as sort of this 1920s flapper woman. And the illustrations are fabulous – the artist is amazing. And then the kids made their own conversation poems. I had the outline for them, and they had their little bubbles. They made up however their two characters were and then they had the conversation between the two characters. And they just loved it. It was a great mini-lesson and the thing took 30 minutes.

*Gisela:* I think Millie Rodriguez did that last year and her writing scores were great, but she just had a regular class. ... She'd give a discussion question, and they would answer it and then ... they would switch back and forth. So, they were having this discussion, but they're writing it down and they're fixing each others'.

*Molly:* We do that [students write back and forth]. Those are great. We call them *dialogue journals*. They're really helpful.

*Amy:* I think using books to start writing is a really good idea. ... George Ancona has a series of books out called, and they're bilingual. They're

called, *My neighborhood*, *My family*, *My home*, *My city*, and they [illustrations] are all pictures. So, a really cool unit ... each kid got an individual camera, went home, and took different pictures of their own life – their own neighborhood, their own family, their own whatever. So, their story starters were the actual photographs ....

*Cristy*: That's what I was going to share. I saw an example of – the kids had journals and the teacher had them bring in a picture. They put it on the front, then did a mini-lesson on adjectives, so then they went to their picture and had to brainstorm as many adjectives as they could from it .... She had them bring in another picture and a different type of writing, but she pulled it from the picture. That was really neat.

*Amy*: It's incredible the difference when having kids write about something meaningful to them and to their lives.

*Gisela*: And kids love pictures. There are plenty of pictures to go around.

(Study Group 6, November 20, 2008)

The dialogue shifted the norms of interaction and allowed all teacher study group participants to have a voice to share practical and pedagogical ideas for writing instruction for ELLs (Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002; Samway, 2005). In prior study group sessions, teachers' turn-taking frequently followed two patterns: (a) one participant taking the floor for an extended period of time, paired with (b) other participants interjecting brief statements or questions. These patterns often placed one or two participants as experts who explained personal ideas or answered

others' questions (e.g., Cristy's explanation of compliance to ELD mandates, Molly's description of classroom big goals). In the conversation above, the discourse reflected all teachers as experts in dialogue and exploration ideas for the ELD classroom, including the use of children's literature, conversation poems, dialogue journals, personal photos, and other meaningful approaches to writing instruction.

Although the assessment-based cultural model of learning remained relatively unquestioned throughout the first half of the semester, teachers' discourse in the final study group sessions revealed a competing cultural model of learning that focused on the needs and complexities of students, rather than the reliance on assessment. The teachers' shifts in discourse – referring to students by name, discussing their diverse and unique needs, and designing instruction based on students' needs – exposed the learner-centered cultural model of learning, compared to the previously used assessment-centered model of learning. Whereas the overall study group sentiment early in the semester gave precedence to appropriate ELD policy implementation, teachers eventually shed the top-down language pressures from their shoulders and returned their efforts to designing effective instruction to meet the learning needs of students.

*Teacher learning as change in participation over time in the Maravilla teacher study group.* Using data from the penultimate teacher study group, the final session with an inquiry-based topic to ground and guide the conversation, I demonstrated the changes in talk that occurred over time in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. Whereas the data from the initial interviews and early study group sessions exposed dominant cultural models of language, learning, and

ELLs, the teachers' discourse in this late November session revealed changes in cultural models that occurred over the duration of the semester.

Although I only provided discourse from the sixth teacher study group to show change in teachers' talk over time, the data exhibited a gradual change that took place throughout the semester. In initial interviews and early study group sessions, teachers' discourse included questions and concerns on how to appropriately enact language policy, such as what classroom instruction looks like, how to use ELP standards for lesson planning, and how to set up a daily schedule. The discourse of study groups in the middle of the study exhibited a balance between the focus on following policy to a focus on good pedagogy. The discourse of the final study groups and exit interviews exhibited best practices and good pedagogy focused on students' needs and pushing forward student achievement. From analysis of broad trends in the data, the marked change in teachers' discourse and the overall ambience in the teacher study group sessions occurred in late-October after the state compliance audit of the school district; all participants became more comfortable and candid as top-down compliance pressures waned. The reduction of top-down pressures rid the study group ambience of the rigid institutional structures that framed early discussions, opening up increased opportunities for teacher learning.

Although teachers' discourses and cultural models of language and learning changed over the duration of the study, the data demonstrated no shift in teachers' talk on ELLs. Without evidence of changing talk away from deficit-based viewpoints of ELL students and families, the study group teachers maintained the dominant cultural model of ELLs. The cultural models of ELLs appear to be frozen – unchanging and resistant to the small group's



negotiation, interruption, and co-construction of knowledge for practice with ELLs. Using the description of “frozen” metaphors (Holland & Quinn, 1987, p. 154), a cultural model becomes *frozen* due to frequent use, as the assumption is well-known and is not questioned or reconstructed upon every use. Whereas teachers recognized their ability to mediate policy and practice through providing meaningful instruction in the ELD classroom, teachers could not change the rigid institutional policies that segregated ELD and mainstream students. Therefore, the resulting deficit-based cultural models of ELL students and families remained unchecked due to the frequent and daily use in the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School.

In the first section of this chapter, I analyzed teacher learning within single study group sessions through the use of literary tools to mediate knowledge. In this section, I conceptualized teacher learning as change in participation over time in the teacher study group – analyzing how the participants’ discourse and cultural models shifted over the duration of the semester-long research. Both perspectives on learning assume distributed cognition among participants, as teacher learning is demonstrated by the collective change over time. As demonstrated in this chapter, the teachers of the Maravilla ELD study group co-constructed meaning and knowledge together – opening up frequent opportunities for learning. The power of the teacher study group context for professional development was the conglomeration of teachers’ voices that came together to support one another in learning and improving classroom practice for ELLs.

*Teacher Reflections on Learning: Changing Purposes for Involvement*

In the two previous sections, I describe teacher learning in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group – the mediation of knowledge through culturally relevant poetry and scholarly articles in individual teacher study groups and the changes in teachers’ discourse and cultural models over the duration of the semester-long research. To provide a third perspective on teacher learning, I also analyzed learning through the lens of teachers’ changing purposes for involvement (Rogoff, 1997) in the teacher study group. In this final section, I present the teachers’ own words to describe their motivations behind participation in the teacher study group – from initial invitation to final reflection on involvement in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group.

*Initial invitations: Reasons for participation in the teacher study group.* In each of the initial one-on-one interviews held with teachers, I inquired about reasons behind participation in the teacher study group: *What are your purposes and goals for collaborating in this teacher study group?* The teachers’ responses revealed the desire to gain a basic understanding of the ELD mandates and logistical information on how to implement policy in classroom instruction.

*Andrea:* I want to focus on what I’m supposed to be doing during that four hours [ELD block]. What are we supposed to do? (Initial Interview, August 4, 2008)

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*Erica:* With the lesson planning, am I the only one that feels like I’m on the clock? I have to make sure I hit 30 minutes here and 30 minutes here

and 30 minutes here. Or is there a better way to get through the day without feeling pressured? (Initial Interview, August 11, 2008)

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*Mary:* I'm just wondering what a half-hour of grammar instruction would look like every single day .... Is it one lesson that is broken into grammar, vocabulary, reading? Or kind of integrated? (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

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*Gisela:* If I had a better knowledge of teaching reading, if I can be doing something differently, if I'm doing something wrong .... I just need to know. How am I going to get this kid to be able to read? (Initial Interview, August 13, 2008)

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*Joni:* How is everybody meeting the needs of our students in reading given the constraints that we're given? And then, on a practical level, if we have to do this [ELD model}, where are you [ELD teachers] getting your resources? (Initial Interview, August 13, 2008)

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*Molly:* [I need a] Vision of mastery. There's no long-term plan [to get students to English proficiency].... That's the biggest thing. (Initial Interview, August 14, 2008)

The teachers' question-based discourse exposed that their primary purposes for involvement in the study groups were logistical, as they sought basic information on ELD implementation in the classroom. The teachers' reiteration of words and phrases from the language policy (e.g., "four hours," "grammar instruction") demonstrated the institutional pressures teachers felt to comply with ELD instructional expectations.

*Final reflections: Changing purposes for involvement in the teacher study group.* In the final session and exit interviews, I asked teachers to reflect on participation in the teacher study group: *What are you taking from the experience of being in a teacher study group?* Distinct from the initial intentions of ELD classroom survival, teachers' responses revealed the transformation in purposes for involvement over the course of the semester.

Teachers found the Maravilla ELD teacher study group to be a locale for mutual support. Shifting from initial intentions to seek information on proper implementation of mandates, teachers came to desire the exchange of encouragement and assistance of their ELD colleagues. In the exit interview, Gisela and Andrea shared their appreciation for the support provided to them as ELD teachers facing distinct challenges from mainstream teachers.

*Andrea:* I think [what I took from the teacher study group] just the support because we didn't have any where else, that's for sure. The other teachers [teaching non-ELL students] don't understand what we're going through .... The biggest part for me is just to know that I'm not the only one. (Exit Interview, December 9, 2008)

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*Gisela:* It was nice to get insight about what else was going on in the classes.

[I used to wonder:] “Are other teachers having the same struggles as I am?” “What direction can I go?” ... “How do I make sense of all the other expectations that are being put on me and make a mark in my classroom?” And just being able to get an insight of how they’re [other ELD teachers] making it work. (Exit Interview, December 8, 2008)

The teachers at the final meeting echoed the appreciation for the support and encouragement fostered by participation in the teacher study group. The last session focused on reflection; therefore, I prompted teachers to contemplate the value of participating in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. The conversation evolved from teachers’ negotiations of individual purposes for involvement to expressed motivations for social and political change.

*Amy:* What are you taking from actually being in this study group?

*Mary:* I think it [teacher study group] helps with sanity, just being able to talk about it [ELD instruction]. Erica and I talk about it, but [to] just talk about some of your concerns and the issues going on – even if nothing ever gets resolved, because I think nothing ever will, you know? But just being able to talk about it [ELD policy] and get ideas and hear other people that are in the same boat. That was beneficial.

*Jon:* We have potential. Not all of us [Maravilla ELD teachers] are representative in this meeting, and I wish all of us were here because

just like you [Marcy] asked, “Where is all this [language policy] coming from?” And it [ELD policy] *is* political and we should recognize that we need to be educated politically and try and educate other [even non-ELL] teachers politically and get active and be active.

*Amy:* I agree one hundred percent.

*Joni:* And this [teacher study group] has, part of this, it’s [teacher study group] not subversive but it feels a little bit like we’re coming here and we’re really getting to say how you feel.

*Amy:* I think that’s a really great point. And I hope that some of the things that I’m able to write from this group maybe actually make some changes.

*Mary:* And I think that, to open people’s eyes up to it [ELD language policy], because people just don’t know. Like, I don’t even know, and I’m right in the middle of it.

*Erica:* I think for me it’s something, like how they said being able to come and hear people in different grade levels and hear that we have some of the similar issues – and they’re in sixth grade or in first grade. So, being able to hear that and even having them share some ideas. And we can use some of that even though [we are] at second grade level. And being able to know I can go to either one of them (*points to Joni and Molly*) for help, maybe, with something, because we’re all kind of,

like, [in] this whole ELD model, so knowing more who I can go to for help or questions...

*Molly:* I feel like I've been able to have a voice about the things that I've experienced over this quarter and things like that through this [teacher study group]. And so, I think kind of the same lines as what you [Joni] said, I hope that this [participation] can incite some sort of political action that is farther than what I feel is within my boundary to say and to do as a classroom teacher and out of the respect of my students, not saying too much myself publicly. Because I'm a huge activist in every other area of my life, and this is the one area I sometimes feel like there is a wall and I can't go past that because of my families and my students and my job and the respect that I have for Maravilla. (Study Group 7, December 4, 2008)

The teachers' discourse demonstrated a negotiation of the political possibilities of teachers to make change to language policies. Marcy's statement of doubt (i.e., "Even if nothing ever gets resolved, because I think nothing ever will") sparked Joni's response (e.g., "We have the potential"), which then opened the dialogue on the political nature of the teacher study group. Whereas Erica maintained the focus on the mutual support from other ELD teachers, Joni, Molly, and Marcy described changing purposes for involvement that included a plight for political change and social activism.

*Teacher learning as changing purposes for involvement in the Maravilla teacher study group.* Within a community of learners, teachers' participation changes and deepens over time – resulting in

learning. In this study, teachers demonstrated a change in participation over time by their shift in purposes for involvement in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. As participation was voluntary, the teachers originally chose to take part in the study group for logistical guidance and answers to basic questions on ELD implementation in the classroom. As the expectations for ELD instruction were rolled out throughout the semester, teachers joined the group in August in search of immediate answers not yet received from Maravilla instructional coaches. Marcy portrayed many of the teachers' initial motivations when she stated, "There's a lot of Type-A people [i.e., obsessive, thorough, impatient] that need to know [the expectations ahead of time]" (Study Group 7, December 4, 2008). As instructional coaches passed down mandates over the course of the semester, teachers joined the study group looking for the *big picture* of the ELD expectations.

As the fall semester of the 2008-2009 school year progressed, teachers' purposes for involvement in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group changed. As they received more information about the ELD implementation, their participation in the study group was motivated by (a) the practical need for social support to implement ELD mandates in a meaningful way and (b) the political need to freely voice antagonistic thoughts and opinions on the top-down mandates forced upon them. The teachers' changing purposes for involvement were closely linked to the shifts in the teacher study group over the semester. As teachers initially elected to participate in the study group for logistical support, the discourse from the teacher study group sessions early in the semester reflected similar topics and foci. Teachers' final reflections on involvement, including emphasis on meaningful instruction and political implications, mirrored the change in the teacher study group



discourse to negotiate, interrupt, and move away from dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs.

### *Conclusion*

In the final findings chapter, I portrayed the teacher learning that occurred in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. Due to the complexities of teacher learning in the sociocultural framework, I explored three avenues to demonstrate teacher learning – the mediation of tools in teacher study group sessions, change in talk across teacher study group sessions, and teachers’ reflections on changing purposes for involvement. In the three findings chapters, I scrutinized (a) the dominant cultural models of language, ELLs, and learning reflected in teachers’ discourse, (b) how teachers’ situated identities mediated discourse and affected their acceptance or rejection of the dominant cultural models, and (c) how teachers’ discourse and cultural models changed through participation and interaction in the teacher study group. In the next and final chapter, I discuss the implications of my research on teacher learning and ELLs.

## CHAPTER 7

Teacher Learning and English Language Learners: Every Child *Can* and *Will* Learn

### SOÑANDO JUNTOS

*un sueño*  
*lo soñamos*  
*solos*

*la realidad*  
*la soñamos*  
*juntos*

### DREAMING TOGETHER

*a dream*  
*we dream*  
*alone*

*reality*  
*we dream*  
*together*

-- Francisco X. Alarcón, *Poems to Dream Together*

In the past six chapters, I presented my research on teachers of ELLs during a time of a mandated language policy implementation in Arizona. I aimed to examine how teachers grappled with policies and notions of teaching and learning language to determine how educators learned about ELLs in a small-group setting. The questions that guided my research were these:

- What are the cultural models reflected in teachers' discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' different situated identities (e.g., teachers, citizens) mediate their discourses on ELLs?
- How do teachers' discourses and cultural models on language, learning, and ELLs change when introduced to new tools and ideas in a small-group?

Adopting the sociocultural perspective on learning, and using the construct of *figured worlds* (Holland *et al.*, 1998), I examined the social construction of knowledge in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group. Through case study research, including qualitative methodology of data collection and discourse analysis, I documented the dominant cultural models in teachers' discourse and discussed how teachers accepted, rejected, and negotiated those institutionally

supported cultural models individually and in the small-group setting. In this final chapter, I step back to reflect on and explain what the findings mean for Maravilla School and the education of ELLs in the U.S. The chapter is organized in four sections: (a) Conclusions, (b) Implications, (c) Directions, and (d) Reflections.

*Conclusions: Lessons from the Maravilla Teacher Study Group*

Based on the perspectives of participating teachers and conclusions from the study group sessions, the following fictional vignettes describe two possible realities of Mrs. Jones, a teacher of ELLs during new language policy implementation in Arizona schools. The scenarios demonstrate the distinct realities potentially experienced by Mrs. Jones based on one single variable – (non)participation in a school-based teacher study group to negotiate dominant cultural models, co-construct knowledge of practice for ELLs, and mutually support colleagues in learning.

*Take 1:* Mrs. Jones teaches in an ELD classroom in the first year of policy implementation. She attends school trainings, feeling uneasy and unsure about the top-down mandates staunchly dictated by administrators, which require her to teach four hours of skill-based English language instruction. In a classroom of ELLs with various backgrounds, learning needs, and interests, she struggles to implement the prescriptive mandates while differentiating classroom instruction. Alone inside the four walls of her classroom without support to implement the new ELD policy, Mrs. Jones executes the language policy without questioning the efficacy or meaning for her students. Reproducing the dominant cultural models inherent in the

language policies, she insists on English language for school success, perceives students' first language as a hindrance to their learning, perceives her students as low achievers, and teaches skill-based English to raise students' AZELLA scores. Frustrated by the complexities of the ELD classroom, Mrs. Jones carries out the assimilative, prescriptive instruction for the ELLs in her classroom.

*Take 2:* At the commencement of the school year, Mrs. Jones seeks out the opportunity to participate in a teacher-learning community offered by her school or district focused on teaching ELLs in the ELD classroom. After attending the various staff trainings on the ELD mandates, she joins her colleagues at the teacher study group sessions to discuss and problem-solve ways to implement the policy in meaningful ways. As her needs as an ELD teacher change throughout the semester, the study group also shifts – starting as a resource within which to ask questions and seek answers and transforming into a community of educators in similar circumstances to provide encouragement, share instructional ideas, and support teacher learning. Through dialogue in the teacher study groups, the dominant cultural models supported by English-only language policies are interrupted and negotiated, as teachers co-construct competing cultural models that more effectively frame and guide meaningful instruction for ELLs.

Being Mrs. Jones in either Take is a very real possibility for teachers of ELLs. The principal difference in Takes lies in participation in a school-based, teacher learning

community specifically focused on ELLs and ELD classroom instruction. In this section, I discuss the findings from the ELD teacher study group and what the findings signify for teacher learning at Maravilla School. The section is organized by the three research questions: (a) Cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs, (b) Situated identities of Maravilla teachers, and (c) Teacher learning in the study group.

*Cultural models of language, learning, and English language learners.* To begin discussion of the findings from my research with the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, I described the dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs revealed in teachers' discourse. The dominant cultural models came together to provide coherence to the figured world of ELD teaching, which teachers used to make meaning of everyday activities and weather the complexities of teaching in the ELD classroom. Grounded in societal insistence on rapid cultural and linguistic assimilation to be *American*, structures within the educational institution supported the production and reproduction of the dominant cultural models. Through this first research focus, I attempted to not only uncover the dominant cultural models reflected in teachers' discourse, but also to plan the teacher study group sessions to support teachers in the negotiation of the taken-for-granted assumptions of language, learning, and ELLs.

As linguistic difference is a typical characteristic shared by ELLs, cultural models of language grounded the figured world of ELD teaching. Because ELLs had been placed in an ELD classroom solely based on the result of ELP (AZELLA) test scores, ELLs' linguistic backgrounds (e.g., first language of Spanish) led teachers to assume linguistic deficit. With students' achievement measured in English only, dominant cultural models position ELLs as

*low* or *slow*. The reliance on the AZELLA led teachers to objectify students with a numerical label. Rather than references to students by name or descriptions of their unique needs as learners, teachers' use of the AZELLA score reduced the complexities of the various students in the ELD classroom. By dictating students' abilities and teachers' expectations with static numerical labels (e.g., 1, 2, 3, or 4), the cultural models, produced and maintained by the institutional structures of English-only language policies, simplified the complexities presented by the ELD classroom context.

The findings demonstrate the power of societal ideologies and institutional structures, as the intelligent teachers at Maravilla School often unknowingly utilized dominant cultural models to make meaning of daily life in the ELD classroom. When pressured to comply with top-down educational policies, teachers succumb to the weight and demands placed upon them from those in positions of power. For example, the state department, district office, and school-site administration demanded the use of AZELLA to demonstrate language proficiency; to appear compliant with administrative policies, teachers insisted upon the AZELLA as the primary indicator of success for ELLs in school. Even teachers with strong preservice teacher preparation for ELLs (i.e., teacher education programs that emphasize bilingual and multilingual instruction) can take on the dominant cultural models supported by the powerful structures within the educational institution. Left unchecked throughout the tenure of an inservice classroom teacher, such as Mrs. Jones in *Take 1*, the dominant cultural models (e.g., language difference as hindrance, deficit-based thoughts on ELLs) that make up the figured world of ELD teaching can negatively affect the education that ELLs receive in the classroom.

*Situated identities of Maravilla teachers.* The dominant cultural models provided teachers a realm of interpretation (Holland *et al.*, 1998) to make meaning of daily activities in the ELD classroom – simplifying the complexities of language, learning, and ELLs. Nevertheless, the dominant cultural models did not serve as a script for teachers’ discourse and behaviors. Teachers as individuals identified in various ways with the figured world of ELD teaching – taking distinct perspectives on activities and asserting agency to make individual decisions and statements. Teachers’ unique situated identities resulted in varied discourse, including the acceptance or rejection of dominant cultural models. As well as the mediation of individual discourse, teachers’ socially situated identities mediated the collaborative discourse of the teacher study group – opening and closing opportunities for teacher learning.

Power and position, afforded to certain individuals by the top-down structure of the educational institution, affected the discourse within the social interaction of the teacher study group. In her institutional identity (Gee, 2001) as the instructional coach, Cristy assumed the responsibility to ensure that all Maravilla teachers remained in compliance with the ELD mandates prescribed by the state department. With intense pressures in the beginning of the school year from state and district levels, Cristy, in turn, placed the staunch expectations for policy compliance on the shoulders of the ELD teachers. In the context of the teacher study group, Cristy’s discourse transformed as the top-down demands waned over the duration of the semester. The hierarchical structure of power and prestige inherent in the educational institution positioned Marcy, a first-year teacher, at the bottom of the totem pole. Her situated identity as the new teacher led her to use different social languages in the presence and absence of Cristy – her instructional coach and superior at Maravilla.

The findings exhibit the integral role of power and position at Maravilla School, shaped by the top-down configuration of the educational institution. The title of instructional coach insinuates that Cristy's role is to support teachers to improve instruction. Nevertheless, the school district's fear of consequences for noncompliance with state-mandated language policies compelled Cristy to focus more on policy and less on practice. As demonstrated through her participation in the teacher study group, Cristy's institutional identity inadvertently led her to limit opportunities for teacher learning. Her discourse at the commencement of the study closed possible prospects for teacher learning, as she insisted on language policy compliance; the transparent shift away from policy compliance opened opportunities for teacher dialogue and learning about meaningful instruction for ELLs. The power of Cristy's presence was most noticeable in the data by Marcy, the new teacher who felt the necessity to accommodate her ideas (Smagorinsky *et al.*, 2004). In positioning Cristy as the enforcer of language policy at Maravilla School, the top-down hierarchy of the educational institution limited teacher learning. As policy pressures eased over the semester, opportunities for learning increased.

In addition to the institutional identities of the instructional coach and new teacher, the situated identities of the TFA alumna and social activist mediated Molly's discourse in the teacher study group. Refusing to succumb to the institutionally ascribed power held by the instructional coach, Molly actively resisted the dominant cultural models throughout the teacher study group research. Despite the rigid, prescriptive mandates for four-hour, skill-based English language instruction, Molly sought to ensure that her students received a content-based, well-rounded education, including sound pedagogical approaches such as



writers' workshop, inquiry-based science, and teaching for social justice. Although she described her actions in the classroom as *silent defiance*, she did not suppress her thoughts and ideas in her discourse in the teacher study group. The transparency that Molly exhibited in her discourse mediated teacher learning in the study group through the incorporation of her instructional approaches – opening opportunities for teachers to dialogue around meaningful teaching, rather than the prescriptive and mandated ELD skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and conversation. Similar to Mrs. Jones in *Take 2*, Molly's situated identity and participation in the teacher study group led her to perceive the dominant cultural models as insufficient in providing meaningful and effective instruction for her students.

Molly's voice was integral to teacher learning in the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, as her refusal to accept the dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs mediated the negotiation and co-construction of competing cultural models. Evidenced by her discourse throughout the study, Molly had political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001), as she recognized and purposefully utilized her mediating role between institutional policy and classroom practice. She demonstrated awareness of the assimilative intents of English-only language policies and grounded her instruction in the unique needs of her students as learners. Her political and ideological clarity, demonstrated through the situated identity of the social activist, strengthened her resolve to reject the dominant cultural models that negatively affected her students' achievement.

Nonetheless, the power of the top-down policies eventually wore Molly down. Before the penultimate study group, she divulged that she was on the verge of quitting – frustrated with the school's failure to meet the needs of special education students in the

implementation of ELD policy. Although she remained at Maravilla for the remainder of the school year, Molly chose to leave after the 2008-2009 school year, moving to another part of the country to teach at a school aligned with her student-centered approach to instruction. Nevertheless, without the support from the teacher study group, similar to Mrs. Jones in *Take 1*, Molly would have been more likely to leave halfway through the school year due to her numerous frustrations with the prescriptive, assimilative language policies.

*Teacher learning in the study group.* The Maravilla ELD teacher study group provided a context for teachers to negotiate dominant cultural models and co-construct meaning in the figured world – supporting one another in dialogue about ELLs and ELD classroom instruction. Using the sociocultural conception of teacher learning as change in participation over time, I conceptualized learning as change in teachers' talk in the study group. First, teachers learned in study group sessions through the mediation of literary tools, such as culturally relevant poetry and scholarly literature. Second, teachers learned over the duration of the semester-long research through the negotiation of dominant cultural models and the co-construction of knowledge for teaching ELLs. Third, teachers changed purposes for involvement in the group over the semester, deepening their participation in the teacher learning community to support one another as ELD colleagues.

Through my analysis of the seven teacher study group sessions, I discovered that changes in teachers' discourses and cultural models did not occur simply because we were engaged in social interaction. Specific instances in the teacher study group opened up opportunities for learning. In individual study group sessions, culturally relevant poetry and scholarly literature opened opportunities for learning by giving teachers new ways to

articulate their ideas and beliefs about ELLs. The use of mediating tools interrupted the dominant cultural models inherent in ELD language policy and supported teachers in thinking outside of the box. Changes in teachers' talk occurred over time, as policy compliance demands waned and Cristy tacitly gave permission to dialogue about meaningful instruction outside of the rigid ELD mandates. In early study group sessions, policy compliance staunchly guided teachers' discourse due to top-down pressures, which were magnified with Cristy's presence; the emphasis on strict compliance to language policies closed opportunities for teacher learning. As policy pressures diminished, teachers initiated more opportunities for learning in the study group. In later sessions, teachers actively negotiated the dominant cultural models of language and learning and co-constructed knowledge of meaningful ELD classroom instruction.

My findings demonstrated the power of school-based teacher learning communities to give teachers a space to negotiate policy and practice. Instead of thoughtlessly succumbing to rote, mandated ELD instruction and unknowingly falling prey to dominant cultural models, the teachers came together to grapple with language policy, negotiate dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs, and co-construct knowledge for ELD classroom practice. Especially later in the study, when teachers were able to focus less on compliance details, the study group sessions were energizing and inspiring – colleagues coming together from across grade levels to share meaningful ideas for practice and celebrating the success of the students in their ELD classrooms. Much of the power of the teacher study group resided in the specific focus on language and ELLs, as teachers broke down the dominant cultural models specific to linguistically diverse students at Maravilla.

Although the data analysis focused primarily on the opened opportunities for teacher learning, the closed opportunities also provided beneficial insight for what hindered learning in the teacher study group. More opportunities for teacher learning would likely have occurred under a different policy context. Prescriptive approaches to instruction leave little room for teachers to thoughtfully plan instruction based on students' learning needs. When the state of Arizona dictates how to teach the students at Maravilla School, the educational institution only places value on how teachers can learn to comply with language policy demands. For the purposes of this study, I had to focus on changes in teachers' talk to demonstrate learning in the small group setting, as rigid institutional policies prohibit teachers to change their actions in classroom instruction (e.g., using research-based practices such as teaching in Spanish).

Outside of the institutional limitations on the teacher study group, the design of the learning environment for teachers also played a role in the opportunities for change in teachers' talk. Based on analysis of sessions in which few opportunities for learning arose, I discovered that the study group meetings must be thoughtfully planned spaces that include (a) clear inquiry topics and questions to guide conversation and (b) the incorporation of new tools, such as children's and scholarly literature, to generate meaningful dialogue and mediate teacher learning about ELLs (Birchak *et al.*, 1998). Although I designed and facilitated the Maravilla ELD teacher study group for the purpose of this study, the power of the teacher study group design lies in the creation of a space for teachers to guide and support one another in inquiry and dialogue – where teachers as professionals take charge of their own talking, theorizing, and learning.

Regardless of the various opened- and closed-opportunities for learning (Little, 2003), the Maravilla ELD teacher study group supported changes in teachers' talk about ELLs; therefore, similar to Mrs. Jones in *Take 2*, the learning that occurred in the teacher study group sessions opened the possibility for changes in teachers' action to provide meaningful instruction to students in the ELD classroom. In the next section, I broaden the findings from Maravilla School to the education of ELLs across the U.S.

*Implications: Teaching English Language Learners in United States Schools*

The following fictional vignettes describe the circumstances for Juan, a newly enrolled ELL student. The first depicts the education of ELLs in Arizona if things continue how they are – dictated by assimilative, monolingual language policies that segregate students based on linguistic backgrounds and rob ELLs of rich, content-based instruction. The second depicts a more just and meaningful prospect for the education of ELLs – guided by ideals that value cultural and linguistic difference and ground instruction in students' cultural resources while addressing the unique needs of learners.

*Take 1:* Juan's parents enroll him in an Arizona school, and he is placed in the third-grade ELD classroom after failing to demonstrate ELP on the AZELLA. The school labels him an ELL due to his AZELLA score, which mandates four hours of skill-based, English language instruction devoid of content areas. After three years, Juan receives a five on the AZELLA and is moved to the mainstream sixth-grade classroom. Due to three years in the ELD classroom devoid of content instruction, Juan struggles with grade-level math, social studies, and science.

*Take 2:* Juan enrolls in an Arizona school and joins a richly diverse third-grade classroom. Valuing Juan's linguistic resources, his teacher assesses him in both his native language and English to differentiate instruction to meet his unique needs as a learner. His teacher provides him with meaningful opportunities with the English language through frequent interaction with peers, use of cognates, and use of bilingual texts to build on his Spanish literacy skills, culturally relevant texts in literature circles, and rich inquiry-based science and social studies lessons.

Juan's two distinct scenarios demonstrate the dichotomous possibilities for the future education of ELLs in the U.S. While language policies dictate prescriptive instructional approaches on paper, teachers are those that interpret and carry out the policies with the students in classrooms. The *Take 1* scenarios of both Mrs. Jones and Juan reflect a classroom with a teacher who is underprepared, unsupported, and overwhelmed by the ELD prescriptive mandates. Both *Take 2* scenarios portray a classroom with a teacher who is equipped, encouraged, and confident to provide meaningful instruction for ELLs despite the language policy demands. Teachers hold the power in transforming education for ELLs.

In this study, I utilized the concept of figured worlds to examine teacher learning. Through the analysis of the figured world of ELD teaching at Maravilla School, I captured the interlinking complexities of dominant cultural models, situated identities, and teacher learning. Teachers used the figured world as a realm of interpretation to make meaning of daily activity in the ELD classroom; however, the social construction of knowledge in the teacher study group began to unravel that interpretive backdrop by interrupting and

negotiating the dominant cultural models. As figured worlds are in constant “adjustment, reorganization, and movement” (Holland *et al.*, 1998, p. 45), educators have the capacity to *re-figure* the realm of interpretation currently supported by the wider educational institution to better meet the unique needs of students. In this section, I describe the implications of this study, which calls for the *re-figuring* of education for ELLs in U.S. schools – providing Juan with meaningful instruction as described in *Take 2*. My propositions for re-figuring education are organized by three institutional structures that support the figured world of teaching ELLs: (a) Re-figuring policy, (b) Re-figuring schools, and (c) Re-figuring teacher education.

*Re-figuring policy.* Grounded in assimilative and monolingual societal ideologies, English-only language policies rob students of their first language in an attempt to force English proficiency in a one-year period. Past research has debunked the English-only language policies, demonstrating the misalignment with second language acquisition research (Krashen, Rolstad, & MacSwan, 2008) and the resulting lack of effectiveness for teaching ELLs (Mahoney & MacSwan, 2005; Parish *et al.*, 2005; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Thompson, DiCerbo, Mahoney, & MacSwan, 2002). Although I disagree with proponents of English-only language policies who maintain that school success can only occur in English, the findings from my study did not discredit or validate the effectiveness of ELD mandates, as student achievement was not the focus of the study. Instead, my findings offer implications for how teachers can effectively interact with and carry out language policies while still taking into account the rich diversity and unique learning needs of all students.

Top-down educational policies compel teachers to teach in specific ways. Rather than ground instruction in students' learning needs based on the professional judgment of highly-qualified teachers, lawmakers decide and dictate how teachers must teach. Language policies reproduce dominant cultural models that negatively affect the education of ELLs. Balderrama (2001) described how English-only language policy negatively affects teacher preparation, as the legislation makes the teacher's role perfunctory and mechanical. Grounded in the anti-immigrant societal discourse, English-only language policy – enforced through fear and intimidation of teachers from state compliance threats and audits – results in a “lethal pedagogy which ultimately misprepares teachers and miseducates immigrant children” (Balderrama, 2001, p. 256). Besides forcing specific approaches to instruction, teachers unknowingly take on the discourse and assumptions implied in the mandates. In Arizona, current language policies give students a static, homogenizing label based solely on their AZELLA score, segregate ELLs into ELD classrooms, and perceive students' first language as a deficit to the sole goal of rapidly learning English.

Classroom teachers are at the center of language policy implementation (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996); however, teachers often implement and internalize policies without realization (Auerbach, 1993). Making implicit reference to the role of dominant cultural models in classroom instruction, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) asserted, “The discourse of schools, communities, and states helps reinforce unstated beliefs so that teachers come to believe not only that what they are doing reflects explicit policies but that the policies are generally in the best interest of students” (p. 417). When gauging all classroom success in the top-down institutional constructs (e.g., success is testing proficient on AZELLA and



shedding the ELL label), teachers reinforce coercive relations of power, or the exercise of power by the dominant institution to the subordinate students (Cummins, 2000). Similar to Juan in *Take 1*, the institutional hierarchy of education in Arizona compels ELLs to “deny their cultural identity and give up their languages as a necessary condition for success in the ‘mainstream’ society” (Cummins, 2000, p. 44).

Rather than passively accept, and therefore reinforce, top-down language policies, teachers can actively take a stand to promote collaborative relations of power (Cummins, 2000) that empower the cultural and linguistic rights of students, families, and teachers. Rather than expect assimilation to the mainstream norm, teachers have the possibility to affirm and extend students’ identities in classroom instruction and interaction. Teachers assess and build on the language and literacy backgrounds that students bring to the classroom, as well as utilize the funds of knowledge (Moll *et al.*, 1990) that exist in their communities. Students, parents, and others in the community are cognizant that they are respected by teachers and other school leaders; therefore, they are empowered to make heard their unique and diverse voices rather than be silenced. Through the “collaborative creation of power” (Cummins, 2000, p. 44) in the classroom, teachers promote institutional change that can lead to broader political and social change (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

I contend that political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001) is a main factor in how teachers carry out language policy in the classroom. Findings from this study indicated that Molly, the social activist, was more impervious to the dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs. Due to her awareness of the political and ideological nature of her position as a classroom teacher, she was able to actively resist the

top-down pressures of the assimilative language policies to provide meaningful instruction for her students. Her identity as the social activist confirmed her interaction with language policy – taking a committed stand to promote collaborative relations of power in the classroom (Cummins, 2000). Similarly, in Mrs. Jones and Juan’s *Take 2s*, the teacher recognized the requirements of language policies and found ways to incorporate meaningful assessment and instruction. To foster political and ideological clarity, teachers need the overt opportunity to critically explore and dialogue on institutional and social issues that affect the school and community. These opportunities for critical inquiry should be woven into school- and university-based teacher professional development, which is described in the next two sections, respectively.

*Re-figuring schools.* The findings from this study demonstrated the negative consequences of the top-down implementation of language policies in Arizona for teachers as professionals. From state to districts to schools to teachers, demands for compliance come down from above with little to no thoughts about those that the policy affects most – the students. To re-figure the education of ELLs in the U.S., schools must improve from within (Barth, 1990). Barth (1990) placed collegiality as the key to school reform from the inside out. He used the work of Little (1981) to outline four needed aspects to promote collegiality at a school site; teachers as colleagues: (a) “talk about practice,” (b) “observe each other engaged in practice,” (c) “engage together in work on curriculum,” and (d) “teach each other what they know about teaching, learning, and leading” (Barth, 1990, p. 31). The four collaborative efforts of educators at school sites are encouraged through school-based, teacher learning communities (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

Teacher learning communities empower teachers to generate change within their own schools and classrooms, like Mrs. Jones and Juan's teacher in *Take 2*. McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) define the common thread among the various definitions and approaches; a teacher learning community is "a professional community where teachers work collaboratively to reflect on their practice, examine evidence about the relationship between practice and student outcomes, and make changes that improve teaching and learning for the particular students in their classes" (p. 3-4). Based at the school site, teacher learning communities allow teachers to make sense of the macro-level institutional policies in the micro-level realities of their own classrooms – providing a locale for teachers to mediate policy and practice. Rather than carry out instruction mandated or prescribed by institutional authorities, teachers negotiate and co-construct meaning to produce change from within the school.

The Maravilla ELD teacher study group provided one example of a school-based, teacher learning community where teachers supported one another in the mediation of ELD mandates and meaningful classroom instruction. Teacher study groups provide a locale for colleagues to come together to voice thoughts and ideas as professionals and provide long-term support for reflection and dialogue (Birchak *et al.*, 1998). Through inquiry into pertinent topics that affect classroom practice, study groups provide sites to negotiate institutional policies and destabilize dominant cultural models that may negatively affect children. Past research on teacher learning communities (Florio-Ruane, 2001; Florio-Ruane *et al.*, 1997; Lewis & Ketter, 2004; McVee, 2004; Rodgers & Mosely, 2008; Smith & Hudelson, 2001)

have demonstrated the powerful context to foster and support teacher learning for culturally diverse students.

The number of ELLs in the U.S. has increased by 65% in the last decade; if the trend continues, one in every three students will be considered an ELL by the year 2043 (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). With the increasingly linguistically diverse population in the U.S., I contend that teacher study groups need to move beyond cultural diversity to incorporate topics specific to language. With an explicit focus on language, language learners, and language policy, the Maravilla ELD teacher study group provided teachers the opportunity to (a) examine practice specifically for linguistically diverse students, (b) reflect and make changes on instruction specifically for the unique and diverse needs of the ELLs in the ELD classrooms, and (c) explore the relationship between policy and practice and their role as the classroom teacher in the implementation of English-only language policies. In so doing, teachers learned meaningful ways to teach ELLs in the ELD classroom while negotiating the cultural models supported by top-down institutional structures. Teacher learning communities which focus specifically on language are necessary to prepare teachers specifically for linguistic diversity and foster political and ideological clarity to promote change for the education of ELLs in the U.S.

*Re-figuring teacher education.* Whereas school-based communities are a powerful context to support teacher learning, institutes of higher education play an equally important role in preparing teachers to work with ELLs. Teacher education programs need to prioritize instruction that focuses specifically on ELLs and language to prepare teachers for linguistic diversity in the classroom. Although some scholars have started to look at the incorporation

of ELL-specific content in preservice coursework (Abbate-Vaughn, 2008; Bollin, 2007; DeOliveria & Athanases, 2007; Evans *et al.*, 2005; Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008; Poynor, 2005), my findings demonstrate the need for inservice teacher education specific to ELLs. As preservice teacher preparation can become fossilized knowledge after many years in the classroom, inservice teacher education must be given equal attention at institutes of higher education.

In Arizona, inservice teachers are required to take 90 hours of SEI coursework to renew or maintain their teaching certificate. Nevertheless, course content varies, as instructors and agencies vary in their fidelity to the state-mandated curricular framework (Olson & Jimenez-Silva, 2008). Balderrama (2001) asserted, “Anti-immigrant legislation affects teacher (mis) preparation by forcing teachers to regress to passive roles emphasizing standards-driven, technical, one-size-fits-all approaches in addressing the complex educational needs of English language learners” (p. 255). Taken by the letter of the law, the state-mandated SEI training could be detrimental to teacher preparation to work with ELLs, providing a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction of diverse factions of linguistically diverse students. Based on the findings of this study, I propose two changes to current SEI coursework to improve teacher preparation for classroom practice with ELLs: (a) student-centered case study research and (b) critical dialogue on language policy and instruction.

Current SEI coursework in Arizona teaches strategies for sheltered instruction, typically through the SIOP textbook (Echevarría *et al.*, 2008). The SIOP approach outlines how to plan instruction for ELLs, including building vocabulary, allowing multiple opportunities for interaction, and teaching language and content simultaneously. My findings

exposed that teachers had knowledge of generic strategies for teaching ELLs (e.g., language objectives, strategic grouping, and hands-on activities); however, revealed by frequent use of AZELLA scores to label students, teachers did not recognize the diverse and unique needs of ELLs. In addition to broad strategies framed as good teaching for all students, teachers also need opportunities to explore the individual needs of ELLs in the classroom. I propose the integration of ELL-student case study research, in which teachers (a) select specific students to study, (b) collect various qualitative sources of language and literacy data, (c) analyze the data in small teacher communities, (d) connect the findings to pertinent scholarly literature, and (e) plan personalized support and instruction based on the individual students' needs. The SEI course then becomes a locale in which teachers dialogue and learn based on the individual needs of learners rather than the generic strategies prescribed by a textbook.

In addition to the incorporation of case-study inquiry to prepare teachers for the intricacies of linguistic diversity in the classroom, teacher education should incorporate opportunities for teachers to develop political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001). As described in Mrs. Jones' *Take 2* and discussed above, teachers who explore, question, and conceptualize their role in policy implementation and the educational institution are more likely to empower students in the classroom. The current SEI curricular framework required by the state calls for teachers to “know the legal, historical, and educational reasons for SEI” and “define the role of culture in learning” (Arizona Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). To push teachers beyond the unilateral understandings of required topics, I propose the integration of critical inquiry and dialogue; teachers should not only *know* and *define* concepts in accordance with mandated language

policy, but should be allowed to analyze, deconstruct, and evaluate those concepts (Bloom, 1956) as political and ideological entities. Similar to Balderrama's assertion (2001), I propose coursework that creates a context for teachers to negotiate the dominant cultural models inherent in the educational institution that hold the likelihood of negatively affecting students in the classroom.

Rather than dictating the instruction of ELLs from the top down, re-figuring education for ELLs needs to start from the bottom up by preparing teachers (a) to be aware of their role in policy implementation, (b) to continually learn about ELLs through participation in school-based, teacher learning communities, and (c) to understand the complexities of teaching ELLs through effective and research-based teacher education. In the next section, I propose areas of concentration for future research to continue to improve teacher preparation for ELLs.

*Directions: Future Research on Teacher Learning and English Language Learners*

My research with the Maravilla ELD teacher study group explored how teachers learn about ELLs in a small-group context. As the section above indicated, more emphasis on teacher learning and ELLs is needed to re-figure the future realities of ELLs in our education system. To guide the path to meaningful change, new research must be conducted to build on the contributions of this study. This section describes five proposed directions for future research on inservice, small-group teacher learning and ELLs.

*Teacher learning as change in action.* Due to the scope of this study, I focused on teacher learning within the small-group context as change in teachers' talk. Nevertheless, changes in talk do not necessarily lead to changes in action. To re-figure education for ELLs in the U.S.,

teacher research needs to support and analyze the co-construction of actionable knowledge (Argyris, 1993) to ensure teachers' learning moves from talk outside of the classroom to action inside the classroom. To document and demonstrate teacher learning as change in participation over time, future studies need to dedicate a more extensive period of time to determine if and how change in teachers' talk leads to change in teachers' behavior.

*Teacher learning communities for linguistic diversity.* As described in Chapter 2, there is a dearth in the teacher preparation literature in two areas: (a) teacher learning specifically about ELLs and (b) inservice teacher preparation and learning. My study combined both areas, but more research is needed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how to foster teacher learning for linguistic diversity in the school setting. My study focused on White and Latino teachers of primarily Latino ELLs; I propose future research be conducted at schools with teachers and students from many diverse backgrounds.

*Teacher learning and figured worlds.* To gain a deeper understanding of teacher learning in a time of mandated policy implementation, I utilized the theoretical concept of figured worlds (Holland *et al.*, 1998). Through this framework, I was able to analyze (a) how the broader institutional structures supported the dominant cultural models reflected in teachers' discourse, (b) how teachers identified in different ways with the figured world, and (c) how the figured realm of interpretation changed over time. The use of figured worlds to understand teacher learning is integral, as the concept brings together the cultural, social, collaborative, and mediated complexities of teacher learning in the sociocultural paradigm. I propose future research incorporate this theoretical construct to investigate the complexities of teacher learning.



*Mediating tools and teacher learning.* In the Maravilla ELD teacher study group, I incorporated primarily literary tools (e.g., culturally relevant poetry and scholarly literature) to mediate teachers' discourse and social construction of knowledge. In future studies on teacher learning communities, I propose the incorporation of various types of artifacts that incorporate teachers' classroom practice on a deeper level, such as videotaped lessons or student work. Through the use of mediating tools directly from the classroom, teacher learning in the small-groups is explicitly attached to classroom practice.

*Connecting teacher learning with student learning.* Because the social and educational landscapes are constantly shifting, teacher learning is crucial. Nevertheless, teacher learning means very little when not connected to student learning. Due to the scope of my research, I was unable to conduct classroom observations or analyze students' performance to document how teachers used their learning from the teacher study group in the classroom and if that application resulted in student learning. I propose that future research on teacher learning communities make the integral connection to practice – to ensure that teacher learning results in meaningful learning for every student in the classroom.

*Reflections: "Reality We Dream Together"*

Sometime after I made the greatest decision of my life to become a teacher, my mother passed along the one-sentence mission statement that guided her through 30 years of classroom teaching: "I believe that every child *can* and *will* learn." Although at the time I did not fully understand the wisdom in that seemingly simple statement, I acquired the deeper meaning in my first week of teaching.

Still feeling out my existence as an educator, I found myself overtaken by 32 Kindergarteners with the gauntlet of personalities, interests, abilities, and needs. Overwhelmed by the complexities within my classroom, I succumbed to the simplicity of the institutionally-supported dominant cultural models to make excuses for students that struggled in my classroom (e.g., Nora is only four years old and should have waited to start school, Mark's parents are in prison, Arlo is a monolingual Spanish speaker). Reflecting on my first months of teaching and measuring progress made by my students, I heard my mother's persistent voice in my head with the reminder that "every child *can* and *will* learn." My reflection and realization led me to seek out and incorporate ways to celebrate every child in my classroom – to capitalize on students' individual strengths, resources, and funds of knowledge (Moll *et al.*, 1990) to support development and learning in meaningful ways.

Although my mother's words provoked me to question institutionalized assumptions and change my practice early in my teaching career, the current educational landscape in Arizona has produced dominant cultural models that are more resistant to change. Staunchly enforced, top-down language policies provide teachers with one prescriptive solution to the presumed *problem* of teaching ELLs. When the complexities of classroom teaching are paired with new and unknown expectations for policy compliance, teachers fall back on the simplicity of cultural models to merely survive the school day. With the new approach to teaching ELLs in the ELD classroom, teachers at Maravilla School and across Arizona face very new realities – with many complexities, challenges, frustrations, and questions.

My dissertation research allowed me to work with seven talented educators who voluntarily took time out of already busy schedules to participate in the teacher study group.

The Maravilla School administration lauded the study participants as the leaders of the school – those teachers who always put in the extra effort and got results for themselves and their students. Nevertheless, despite teacher preparation or past experience, the implementation of new Arizona language policy led teachers to unknowingly accept dominant cultural models that negatively affected the instruction of ELLs. The Maravilla ELD teacher study group gave teachers a social and interactive locale to negotiate and interrupt dominant cultural models inherent in top-down language policies. In this manner, the teachers supported one another in learning about the best ways to teach the unique and diverse ELLs in their classrooms.

Just as an institutionalized label does not encompass the intricacies of one student, a prescriptive instructional approach based on legislative mandates cannot meet the unique and diverse needs of students in the classroom. Grounded in English-only language policy, Arizona's current approach to ELD instruction assumes that the ELL label insinuates a prototypical student who learns through four hours of skill-based instruction in grammar, vocabulary, conversation, reading, and writing. Just as the stories of Mrs. Jones and Juan illustrate, there exists another option for the future education of ELLs in the U.S. – where teachers are empowered to provide meaningful instruction that value and utilize students' cultural and linguistic resources in classroom instruction. Whereas the institutional structures inherent in Arizona language policy supported the dominant cultural models of language, learning, and ELLs, the Maravilla ELD teacher study group provided a context for teachers to push beyond the simplified notion of ELD classroom instruction. Over the duration of the teacher study group, participants began to explore ELLs as individuals.

In so doing, teachers opened up the door for a new reality in U.S. education – to allow every individual child to decide his or her own dream, rather than the American dream prescribed in English-only policies in U.S. schools. Students, parents, teachers, teacher educators, administrators, policy makers, and voters – the time has come to improve education for ELLs in the U.S. *Let's dream reality together.*

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## APPENDIX A

### PROPOSITION 203

## PROPOSITION 203

### OFFICIAL TITLE AN INITIATIVE MEASURE

TITLE 15, CHAPTER 7, ARTICLE 3.1, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, IS REPEALED. SEC. 3, TITLE 15, CHAPTER 7, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, IS AMENDED BY ADDING A NEW ARTICLE 3.1, ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### TEXT OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

#### Sec. 1. Findings and Declarations

The People of Arizona find and declare:

1. The English language is the national public language of the United States of America and of the state of Arizona. It is spoken by the vast majority of Arizona residents, and is also the leading world language for science, technology, and international business, thereby being the language of economic opportunity; and
2. Immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement; and
3. The government and the public schools of Arizona have a moral obligation and a constitutional duty to provide all of Arizona's children, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, with the skills necessary to become productive members of our society. Of these skills, literacy in the English language is among the most important.
4. The public schools of Arizona currently do an inadequate job of educating immigrant children, wasting financial resources on costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children.
5. Young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language, such as English, if they are heavily exposed to that language in the classroom at an early age.
6. Therefore it is resolved that: all children in Arizona public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible.
7. Under circumstances in which portions of this statute are subject to conflicting interpretations, these Findings and Declarations shall be assumed to contain the governing intent of the statute.

#### Sec. 2. Repeal

Title 15, chapter 7, article 3.1, Arizona Revised Statutes, is repealed.

Sec. 3, Title 15, chapter 7, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new article 3.1, to read:

#### ARTICLE 3.1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

##### SECTION 15-751. DEFINITIONS IN THIS ARTICLE.

1. "BILINGUAL EDUCATION/NATIVE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION" MEANS A LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS IN WHICH MUCH OR ALL INSTRUCTION, TEXTBOOKS, OR TEACHING MATERIALS ARE IN THE CHILD'S NATIVE LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH.
2. "ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM" MEANS A CLASSROOM IN WHICH ENGLISH IS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION USED BY THE TEACHING PERSONNEL, AND IN WHICH SUCH TEACHING PERSONNEL POSSESS A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS ENCOMPASS BOTH ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS AND SHELTERED ENGLISH IMMERSION CLASSROOMS.
3. "ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM" MEANS A CLASSROOM IN WHICH THE STUDENTS EITHER ARE NATIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKERS OR ALREADY HAVE ACQUIREDED REASONABLE FLUENCY IN ENGLISH.
4. "ENGLISH LEARNER" OR "LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT" MEANS A CHILD WHO DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH OR WHOSE NATIVE LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH, AND WHO IS NOT CURRENTLY ABLE TO PERFORM ORDINARY CLASSROOM WORK IN ENGLISH.
5. "SHELTERED ENGLISH IMMERSION" OR "STRUCTURED ENGLISH IMMERSION" MEANS AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROCESS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN WHICH NEARLY ALL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IS IN ENGLISH BUT WITH THE CURRICULUM AND PRESENTATION DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE LEARNING THE LANGUAGE. BOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ARE IN ENGLISH AND ALL READING, WRITING, AND SUBJECT MATTER ARE TAUGHT IN ENGLISH. ALTHOUGH TEACHERS MAY USE A MINIMAL AMOUNT OF THE CHILD'S NATIVE LANGUAGE WHEN NECESSARY, NO SUBJECT MATTER SHALL BE TAUGHT IN ANY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH, AND CHILDREN IN THIS PROGRAM LEARN TO READ AND WRITE SOLELY IN ENGLISH. THIS EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY REPRESENTS THE STANDARD DEFINITION OF "SHELTERED ENGLISH" OR "STRUCTURED ENGLISH" FOUND IN EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE.

##### SECTION 15-752. ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

SUBJECT TO THE EXCEPTIONS PROVIDED IN SECTION 15-753, ALL CHILDREN IN ARIZONA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SHALL BE TAUGHT ENGLISH BY BEING TAUGHT IN ENGLISH AND ALL CHILDREN SHALL BE PLACED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS. CHILDREN WHO ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS SHALL BE EDUCATED THROUGH SHELTERED ENGLISH IMMERSION DURING A TEMPORARY TRANSITION PERIOD NOT NORMALLY INTENDED TO EXCEED ONE YEAR. LOCAL SCHOOLS SHALL BE PERMITTED BUT NOT REQUIRED TO PLACE IN THE SAME CLASSROOM ENGLISH LEARNERS OF DIFFERENT AGES BUT WHOSE DEGREE OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IS SIMILAR. LOCAL SCHOOLS SHALL BE ENCOURAGED TO MIX TOGETHER IN THE SAME CLASSROOM ENGLISH LEARNERS FROM DIFFERENT NATIVE-LANGUAGE GROUPS BUT WITH THE SAME DEGREE OF ENGLISH FLUENCY. ONCE ENGLISH LEARNERS HAVE ACQUIRED A GOOD WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH AND ARE ABLE TO DO REGULAR SCHOOL WORK IN ENGLISH, THEY SHALL NO LONGER BE CLASSIFIED AS ENGLISH LEARNERS AND SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS. AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, CURRENT PER CAPITA SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS SHALL BE MAINTAINED. FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES FOR CHILDREN WHO ALREADY KNOW ENGLISH SHALL BE COMPLETELY UNAFFECTED, AS SHALL SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR PHYSICALLY- OR MENTALLY-IMPAIRED STUDENTS.

##### SECTION 15-753. PARENTAL WAIVERS

A. THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 15-752 MAY BE WAIVED WITH THE PRIOR WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT, TO BE PROVIDED ANNUALLY, OF THE CHILD'S PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIAN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES SPECIFIED IN THIS SECTION. SUCH INFORMED CONSENT SHALL REQUIRE THAT SAID PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIAN PERSONALLY VISIT THE SCHOOL TO APPLY FOR THE WAIVER AND THAT THEY THERE BE PROVIDED A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO BE USED IN THE DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CHOICES AND ALL THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THE CHILD. IF A PARENTAL WAIVER HAS

BEEN GRANTED, THE AFFECTED CHILD SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO CLASSES TEACHING ENGLISH AND OTHER SUBJECTS THROUGH BILINGUAL EDUCATION TECHNIQUES OR OTHER GENERALLY RECOGNIZED EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGIES PERMITTED BY LAW. INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS IN WHICH 20 STUDENTS OR MORE OF A GIVEN GRADE LEVEL RECEIVE A WAIVER SHALL BE REQUIRED TO OFFER SUCH A CLASS; IN ALL OTHER CASES, SUCH STUDENTS MUST BE PERMITTED TO TRANSFER TO A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN WHICH SUCH A CLASS IS OFFERED.

B. THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A PARENTAL EXCEPTION WAIVER MAY BE APPLIED FOR UNDER THIS SECTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. CHILDREN WHO ALREADY KNOW ENGLISH: THE CHILD ALREADY POSSESSES GOOD ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS, AS MEASURED BY ORAL EVALUATION OR STANDARDIZED TESTS OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY COMPREHENSION, READING, AND WRITING, IN WHICH THE CHILD SCORES APPROXIMATELY AT OR ABOVE THE STATE AVERAGE FOR HIS GRADE LEVEL OR AT OR ABOVE THE 5TH GRADE AVERAGE, WHICHEVER IS LOWER; OR

2. OLDER CHILDREN: THE CHILD IS AGE 10 YEARS OR OLDER, AND IT IS THE INFORMED BELIEF OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND EDUCATIONAL STAFF THAT AN ALTERNATE COURSE OF EDUCATIONAL STUDY WOULD BE BETTER SUITED TO THE CHILD'S OVERALL EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND RAPID ACQUISITION OF BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS; OR

3. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: THE CHILD ALREADY HAS BEEN PLACED FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN THIRTY CALENDAR DAYS DURING THAT SCHOOL YEAR IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM AND IT IS SUBSEQUENTLY THE INFORMED BELIEF OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND EDUCATIONAL STAFF THAT THE CHILD HAS SUCH SPECIAL AND INDIVIDUAL PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS, ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CHILD'S LACK OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, THAT AN ALTERNATE COURSE OF EDUCATIONAL STUDY WOULD BE BETTER SUITED TO THE CHILD'S OVERALL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RAPID ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH. A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF NO LESS THAN 250 WORDS DOCUMENTING THESE SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL NEEDS FOR THE SPECIFIC CHILD MUST BE PROVIDED AND PERMANENTLY ADDED TO THE CHILD'S OFFICIAL SCHOOL RECORDS, AND THE WAIVER APPLICATION MUST CONTAIN THE ORIGINAL AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES OF BOTH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND THE LOCAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS. ANY SUCH DECISION TO ISSUE SUCH AN INDIVIDUAL WAIVER IS TO BE MADE SUBJECT TO THE EXAMINATION AND APPROVAL OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, UNDER GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY AND SUBJECT TO THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD AND ULTIMATELY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. TEACHERS AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY REJECT WAIVER REQUESTS WITHOUT EXPLANATION OR LEGAL CONSEQUENCE, THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL NEEDS SHALL NOT COMPEL ISSUANCE OF A WAIVER, AND THE PARENTS SHALL BE FULLY INFORMED OF THEIR RIGHT TO REFUSE TO AGREE TO A WAIVER.

#### SECTION 15-754. LEGAL STANDING AND PARENTAL ENFORCEMENT

AS DETAILED IN SECTIONS 15-752 AND 15-753, ALL ARIZONA SCHOOL CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED AT THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL WITH AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLIC EDUCATION. THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF ANY ARIZONA SCHOOL CHILD SHALL HAVE LEGAL STANDING TO SUE FOR ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS STATUTE, AND IF SUCCESSFUL SHALL BE AWARDED NORMAL AND CUSTOMARY ATTORNEY'S FEES AND ACTUAL AND COMPENSATORY DAMAGES, BUT NOT PUNITIVE OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES. ANY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OR OTHER ELECTED OFFICIAL OR ADMINISTRATOR WHO WILLFULLY AND REPEATEDLY REFUSES TO IMPLEMENT THE TERMS OF THIS STATUTE MAY BE HELD PERSONALLY LIABLE FOR FEES AND ACTUAL AND COMPENSATORY DAMAGES BY THE CHILD'S PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, AND CANNOT BE SUBSEQUENTLY INDEMNIFIED FOR SUCH ASSESSED DAMAGES BY ANY PUBLIC OR PRIVATE THIRD PARTY. ANY INDIVIDUAL FOUND SO LIABLE SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM OFFICE, AND SHALL BE BARRED FROM HOLDING ANY POSITION OF AUTHORITY ANYWHERE WITHIN THE ARIZONA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS.

#### SECTION 15-755. STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR MONITORING EDUCATION PROGRESS

IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS OF ALL ARIZONA STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC SUBJECTS AND IN LEARNING ENGLISH IS PROPERLY MONITORED, A STANDARDIZED, NATIONALLY-NORMED WRITTEN TEST OF ACADEMIC SUBJECT MATTER GIVEN IN ENGLISH SHALL BE ADMINISTERED AT LEAST ONCE EACH YEAR TO ALL ARIZONA PUBLIC SCHOOLCHILDREN IN GRADES 2 AND HIGHER. ONLY STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS SEVERELY LEARNING DISABLED MAY BE EXEMPTED FROM THIS TEST. THE PARTICULAR TEST TO BE USED SHALL BE SELECTED BY THE OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, AND IT IS INTENDED THAT THE TEST SHALL GENERALLY REMAIN THE SAME FROM YEAR TO YEAR. THE NATIONAL PERCENTILE SCORES OF STUDENTS SHALL BE CONFIDENTIALLY PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUAL PARENTS, AND THE AGGREGATED PERCENTILE SCORES AND DISTRIBUTIONAL DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHALL BE MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON AN INTERNET WEB SITE; THE SCORES FOR STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS "LIMITED-ENGLISH" SHALL BE SEPARATELY SUB-AGGREGATED AND MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE THERE AS WELL. ALTHOUGH ADMINISTRATION OF THIS TEST IS REQUIRED SOLELY FOR MONITORING EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS, ARIZONA PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATORS MAY UTILIZE THESE TEST SCORES FOR OTHER PURPOSES AS WELL IF THEY SO CHOOSE.

#### Sec. 4. Severability

If a provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this act are severable.

#### Sec. 5. Application

The provisions of this act cannot be waived, modified, or set aside by any elected or appointed official or administrator, except as through the amendment process provided for in the Arizona constitution.



## APPENDIX B

### INITIAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Personal History

- Tell me about yourself.
- Tell me about where and how you grew up.
- What were your prior experiences that made you decide to become a teacher?
- How do you think your past experiences with language and culture prepared you (or did not prepare you) to become a teacher of ELLs?

### Culture and Language

- What is role does your culture and language play in your life?
- What exposure to other cultures and languages have you had throughout life?
- What were your first experiences with race, color and linguistic difference?
- What are your experiences now with race, color and linguistic difference?

### Learning

- How do kids learn? What factors play a role in how students learn?
- How do culture and language affect learning?
- How do kids learn language or culture?

### English Language Learners

- Tell me about the ELLs in your classroom.
- What sorts of things do you do in your classroom to reach your ELL students?
- What are the biggest rewards in teaching ELLs?
- What are the biggest challenges in teaching ELLs?
- What are the goals that you have for the ELLs?

### English Language Development (ELD) Instruction

- What do you think of the latest ELD, four hour structure?
- How does the ELD approach affect your classroom instruction and student learning?
- What benefits and challenges come with the ELD structure?
- How are you feeling with your student achievement in both language and academics?

What are your purposes and goals for collaborating in this teacher study group?

## APPENDIX C

### EXIT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL SAMPLE

### Identity

- What do you consider to be your identity?
- How do you think your identity affects your teaching?
- *How do you think being a parent affects your teaching?*
- *How do you think being bilingual affects your teaching?*

### From missed focus group

- How has teaching in the ELD classroom changed what you do?
- What have been the positive and negative things that have come from this ELD approach?
- If you could change one thing about the ELD approach, what would you change?
- What are you taking from the experience of being in a teacher study group?
- How has your thinking and teaching changed over the course of the semester?
- Would you teach in the ELD classroom again next year, if given the choice? Why or why not?

### More information

- What university did you go to for undergrad? What did you major in?
- What about your Masters? What was that experience like?
- Do you plan on staying in Arizona to raise your family? What do you hope for the education of your child?
- As someone who is bilingual, what are your thoughts about only teaching kids in English?

### Reflection

- What does the future hold for ELLs and education, considering the latest political ambience?
- What do you think about what is going on for Latinos, specifically immigrants, in the broader public outside of the school context?

### Data checking

- Labels – *Referring to kids by their AZELLA scores*
  - Why do you think that we fall into calling kids by their AZELLA score?
- Deficit thinking - *“the kids with the “language issues”, issues with SpEd kids*
  - What growth have your students made this year?
  - How would you predict the growth would be different in another classroom?
  - How about the growth of your special education kids in particular?
- Frustrations – *Inexperience with teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade*
  - How are you settling in after your first semester in 5<sup>th</sup> grade?
  - What have been the biggest challenges or surprises?

## APPENDIX D

### STUDY GROUP AGENDA

Teacher Study Group  
November 6, 2008, 7:15am

## **TOPIC: Describing our English Language Learners**

**QUESTION:** *How can we define and describe each of our ELLs to value their strengths and support their language growth and development?*

## **AGENDA**

### **10m: Sharing Classroom Experiences**

- What's going well?
- What's causing problems?

### **45m: Describing our ELLs**

- *I am a level 3 reader. Quote quick write*
- Dialogue based on topic and question
- Possible sub-questions to consider:
  - *How do we define and describe ELLs?*
  - *What are the limitations of labeling students with language levels?*
  - *Why have students' AZELLA scores become the primary way we define and describe our students?*
  - *How can we change how we define and describe our ELLs in order to focus on individual students' strengths and areas of needs?*
  - *How can we design our instruction to account for the various language development strengths and needs of individual students?*

### **5m: Reflection and Looking Forward**

- Final thoughts and ideas
- Foci & Dates for next meetings
- November 20<sup>th</sup>: TBD
- December 4<sup>th</sup>: Study Group Reflection and Wrap Up
- Week of December 8<sup>th</sup>: Individual Interviews

## APPENDIX E

### TEACHER STUDY GROUP POSSIBLE TOPICS AND QUESTIONS

- Envisioning the four hour block: What does the ELD block look like?
- Making four hours meaningful: How can we meet the state requirements but continue to teach in meaningful, authentic and effective ways?
- Setting big goals and maintaining high expectations: What goals should guide instruction and investment?
- Defining the vision of mastery: What is our end goal for the English instruction?
- Using the AZELLA to get kids to proficiency: How can we use the AZELLA test and AZELLA scores in order to get kids to test proficient in the spring?
- Being aware of the expert blind spot: How do we know where kids are at and what they get and don't get in the classroom?
- Building classroom community: How can we make students feel comfortable in class?
- Coming up with sound procedures and routines: What's working?
- Social stigma: How can the line between ELD and mainstream be blurred to avoid the stigma?
- Lesson planning within the framework: What's working?
- Connecting with the parents and home life: How can we invest and inform parents?
- Effectively implementing guided reading: How can guided reading be effectively integrated into the four hour block?
- Designing learning environments with proficient models: What other strategies can be used so that students still have various models of proficient English other than the teacher?



## APPENDIX F

### MASTER LIST OF CODES

*Tree nodes:*

## Cultural models of ELLs

- Non-school factors
  - Legal status
  - Parents
  - Poverty and SES
- Student Ability
  - Based on labels
  - Deficit thinking
  - ELD v. Mainstream
- Student Motivation

## Cultural models of language

- Bilingualism
- English monolingualism
- Standard English

## Cultural models of learning

- Assessment centered
- Community centered
- Knowledge centered
- Learner centered

## Cultural models of teaching

- Following policy
- Good pedagogy
- Role of curriculum

## Other

- Questions
- Frustrations
- Inexperience
- Challenges

*Case nodes:*

## Situated identities

- Bilingual
- Monolingual
- Citizen
- Latina
- Parent

- Teach for America
- New teacher
- Instructional Coach

*Free nodes:*

- Mediation by artifacts

APPENDIX G

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

FORM



Research Compliance Office  
Office for Research & Sponsored Projects Administration  
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Tempe, AZ 85287-3503

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**To:** Carmen Martinez-Roldan  
ED

**From:** Mark Roosa, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

**Date:** 12/07/2007

**Committee Action:** Exemption Granted

**IRB Action Date:** 12/07/2007

**IRB Protocol #:** 0712002428

**Study Title:** Teachers' discourse on English language learners: Cultural models of language and learning

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.